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LETTERS

on their own

Little Rock, Ark.

DEAR SIRS: Just finished reading Edward Witten's "Rhetoric of Ambivalence" [*The Nation*, Dec. 16] and I hope that his opinion of the New Left is not shared by too many of our young college students. . . .

Mr. Witten seems to think that a radical movement has to be tied into another radical movement to be successful. Student radicalism toward college administrations doesn't necessarily have to be linked to Black Power advocacy or labor movements to be successful. On their own, the labor radicals of the early 20th century helped to push labor to its high point of today. Radical students have overturned governments in South America, and student protests in America have lead to the "resignation" of a President and a change in foreign policy.

The New Left is just a name for a group of ever changing individual radical movements that can be successful individually. If the students, Black Power advocates, radical laborites and other radical groups were ever to successfully merge, then the downfall of the New Left would come. The New Left would then emerge as the norm and not the radical.

Sgt. Joseph A. Van Jossen

mailman's fight

Ithaca, N. Y.

DEAR SIRS: John Stark ["A Letter Carrier Fights Back," *The Nation*, Jan. 6] has for several years been a friendly, courteous mailman. He reads and thinks, and we have had many pleasant conversations. Last November, however, I discovered that he is a hero, and I suspect that 25,000 other Ithacans have made the same discovery. Stark is courageously bucking the postal system . . . at considerable risk to himself and to his family. I think he will win his case, but in the meantime he will need some financial support. The address is: 413 North Geneva St., Ithaca, N. Y. 14850. Incidentally, I am writing this without having consulted Mr. Stark. He will probably be embarrassed. He is that sort of person.

Robert B. MacLeod

next mission

San Antonio, Tex.

DEAR SIRS: With the spectacular success of project Apollo, the Nixon Administration will be hard put to it to think up a program that can capture the imagination of the nation. The national goal of landing on the moon having been virtually achieved, what national goal does the Republican Administration have for the next four years?

One that could engage the energies of the nation and achieve many subsidiary goals is a program to blow up the moon before the next Presidential election. . . . With man literally making rings around it . . . the moon is seen for what it actually is—a useless hunk of matter. It might have served a purpose in lighting the path of wayfarers in primitive times, but modern man has far better ways of finding his way around. A crude and ineffective way of providing light, the moon is offensive to anyone acquainted with modern theories of illumination.

Blowing up the moon would be a warning to all potential aggressors, terrestrial or extraterrestrial, of the awesome powers in the hands of the nation. The goal of national security, which everybody is striving for, would be immeasurably enhanced. It would, indeed, be the ultimate deterrent. . . . By destroying a lifeless planet, the United States would have demonstrated its belief in the basic sanctity of all forms of life.

Thein Wah

EDITORIALS

The Packard Dilemma

According to James Reston (*The New York Times*, January 8), when Robert McNamara resigned as president of the Ford Motor Co. in 1960 to become Secretary of Defense, his net loss was estimated at slightly more than $4 million. That is, after his seven years of service in the government, the appreciation of his Ford holdings (which he was obliged to sell), plus accrued dividends, lost salary, and possibly some stock option arrangements, would have totaled more than $4 million.

Mr. McNamara was a harsh taskmaster at the Pentagon, in the sense that while he was a big spender he tried to get the government its money's worth and to quash some of the fantastic projects that the generals and admirals sought to put over. There is no reason to believe that if he had been allowed to retain his stock, Mr. McNamara would have given Ford a better break than it got during his term in office, but the conflict of interest would have been blatant. Divestiture was a ritual that had to be performed. And it is to be noted that, far from rushing back to the lush pickings of the military-industrial complex, and there restoring his shattered fortunes, Mr. McNamara took another job in government service.

The case of David Packard, Mr. Nixon's appointee as Deputy Secretary of Defense, is far more complicated than that of Mr. McNamara in 1960. Mr. McNamara worked his way up in the corporate hierarchy and was adequately rewarded for his services, however valuable. In contrast, Mr. Packard is one of the founders of the Hewlett-Packard Co., a leading electronics firm which, perhaps even more than Ford, is in the thick of the military-industrial complex. As board chairman of the company which he largely created, Mr. Packard owns, with Mrs. Packard, 3,610,700 shares, worth approximately $289 million at the market. Dumping more than 3 million shares of an important company would create chaos on the New York Stock Exchange, and even the prospect of a gradual distribution would seriously depress the stock, which is now quoted at about 80.

In an effort to solve the problem without losing his nest egg, Mr. Packard has offered to turn over his shares to a short-term trust managed by members of the Hewlett-Packard board, with profits, if any, going to charity. Should the stock rise while Mr. Packard is in office, the gains will likewise be donated to charity. What is left, which presumably will not be too painfully depressed, will be returned to Mr. Packard on his retirement.

There is every reason to believe that Mr. Packard is entering on his Pentagon duties with only the purest of motives, yet the proposed trust arrangement does not really solve the problem. For even though Mr. Packard, with $300 million, more or less, under the mattress, could have little concern about whether his stock goes up or down a few millions during his absence, he must have some solicitude for the aerospace, electronics and other military-oriented industries as a whole, and what is good for them will be good for Hewlett-Packard.

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Congress will probably accept the trust arrangement as the best that can be made. It has the outward appearance of equity and solicitude for the public interest, and there is a real need for someone with Mr. Packard's technical background to advise the Secretary of Defense. Yet it is a compromise that will not satisfy some observers. As Hobart Rowen points out in *The Washington Post* (January 5), Packard is "the very prototype of the industrialist half of the complex that owes much of its success to the vast U.S. military budget." Rowen continues the argument by calling attention to the pressure for a continuance of big military budgets after peace is concluded in Vietnam, and questions Packard's ability to view impartially questions relating not only to his own company but to the whole philosophy of defense spending.

On this ground he is critical of Packard's appointment. But almost anyone else who had the necessary experience and know-how would be in the same position, with only a quantitative, not a qualitative or moral, difference. The only real solution would be to shrink the military-industrial complex to a magnitude actually required for defense. If anything of the sort happens under the Nixon-Agnew Administration, it will be a miracle indeed.

A Shift Not a Shake-up

The election of Sen. Edward Kennedy as Democratic Whip in the Senate by a 31-to-26 vote, and of Sen. Hugh Scott as Republican Whip by a 23-to-20 vote, represents not the highly significant "shake-up" it has been reported to be but rather a slight shift in power within both parties. Senators Kennedy and Scott should be distinct improvements over Senators Long and Hruska, but their victories reflect only a slight shift in power (the voting in each case was close) from the right wing of each party toward the center. Both the Dixiecrats in the Senate and their counterparts, the Far West and Midwest conservative Republicans, gave a little ground to their respective oppositions. In brief, it is a development that deserves to be mildly applauded but not "hailed" as a major triumph.

Senator Long, incidentally, was not the only loser in the Senate vote. The reasons which Senator McCarthy cited for supporting him were not at all convincing. Dislike and distrust of "the Kennedys" might be a reason for abstaining, as might personal political indebtedness to Senator Long. But personal political loyalty scarcely justifies a vote for Long. At some point, such loyalties must be subordinated to what is best for the party and the nation.

The Welfare Burden

As cities and states face the new year, it is abundantly clear that most of them are in serious financial trouble. From Los Angeles, an innocent among the big cities, comes word that the government faces "the darkest financial crisis in its history," with anticipated appropriations far outstripping sources of revenue. Connecticut will probably double its sales tax in order to meet the expected deficit. Wisconsin, a frugal state under a Republican Governor who promised a surplus, is faced with a huge deficit

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caused largely by an "unprecedented increase" in welfare costs. New York City, where deficits are eternal, needs an additional $500 million, but the word from Albany is that the state itself seeks $700 million in new revenue.

A common theme runs through all these stories: the welfare burden is increasing. New York City is, of course, a special case, but its figures are instructive. Ten years ago, the city spent $235 million on a welfare caseload of 239,000 people. Today the city has 1 million on welfare —one out of eight New Yorkers—and the budget request for welfare is now $1.7 billion. According to Welfare Commissioner Jack R. Goldberg, it is "perfectly conceivable" that the relief population could reach 3 million in the next decade. This constitutes an insupportable burden —insupportable, that is, in its present distribution of roughly 37 per cent federal, 33 per cent state and 30 per cent city. If there is anything to the proposition that there is no resisting an idea whose time has come, it should be possible today to shift the entire welfare burden—in stages—to the federal government, where it belongs.

The case for federal assumption of welfare responsibility is unassailable. First of all the problem is national. "The welfare phenomenon in New York," to quote Mr. Goldberg again, "is a national phenomenon. What's happening is happening in every urban community in this country, and what is necessary is for some specific and pointed changes in national, social and political policy." In Great Britain, as in most European countries, eligibility determination and funding are regarded as national responsibilities. And with the exception of welfare, most subsidy programs here—maritime subsidies, farm subsidies, etc.—are nationally administered. No one suggests, for example, that the city of Des Moines should make a "contribution" to the farm subsidy program. Migrants from Southern rural areas require assistance in the cities to which they are drawn, but the cities did not create the "push" behind the migration. Increased mobility alone is a strong reason for national administration of welfare.

Federal administration would remove the sharp discrepancies in standards and practices which currently exist and would be much more efficient. Welfare imposes an enormous administrative burden on cities, diverting energies and attention from problems which cities might be in a position to do something about—they can do little to minimize welfare caseloads. Local administration creates tensions and frictions, which in turn aggravate problems of municipal government.

Full assumption of welfare responsibility by the federal government could be accomplished for a sum which the Pentagon would regard as a pittance—by some estimates no more than $3.5 billion. President Nixon has had an able task force at work on welfare and related problems, and they have given serious consideration, we are told, to the desirability of shifting, by stages, the welfare burden to the federal government. This might give Congress a better understanding of the social consequences of policies for which it is responsible, and it might also dampen enthusiasm for larger military appropriations. Even a slight adjustment of the welfare-warfare ratio in the allocation of federal funds would be a step—if not a giant step—in the right direction.

Changing the Guard

The return of Ambassador Averill Harriman from the Paris peace talks will conclude the latest chapter of the long career of an energetic, patient and gifted man. In the unlikely event that Mr. Harriman never again lifts a finger in the public service, his community, his state and his country will remain deeply indebted to him.

Henry Cabot Lodge, who will replace him in Paris, has been lately denounced for his espousal, in the past, of the misguided war in Vietnam and for his perverse defense of the odious Saigon government. His repeated and clumsy misinterpretations of the Vietnamese situation clearly disqualify him, it is said, from occupying the U.S. seat at the peace table, in whatever shape it finally materializes. But of this we are not entirely sure.

If it is Mr. Nixon's determination to negotiate a swift settlement, who is in a better position than Ambassador Lodge to slap down, finally and without recourse, the pretensions of the preposterous Ky and his entourage? If even Mr. Lodge is impelled to repudiate his old protégé, Ky's farcical game should be ended once and for all.

Moreover, if Mr. Nixon foresees that peace can come only through compromise—which the American intransigents will decry as being "soft" on communism—he may be protecting his position in advance by sending into the fray a man whose reputation with regard to Communists is hard to the point of mulishness. If Mr. Nixon's strategy embraces one or both of these gambits, his diplomatic talent would have to be rated rather high. It could be.

Political Peonage

From the moment when we first learned of the extraordinary political generosity of the Seafarers' International Union, which bestowed $100,000 on the Democrats under rather unusual circumstances (see "Finger Pointing," *The Nation*, December 16), we have wondered how this union —by no means one of the largest—could spend money in politics like a sailor on shore leave. Its political fund is said to be the biggest maintained by any union.

Now, thanks to the curiosity and enterprise of *The Wall Street Journal*, we know where at least a large part of the answer is to be found. (The *Journal* also turned up the original story about the union's large gift to the Democrats, which was made in the wake of a ruling by Dean Rusk denying Canada's request for the extradition of Harold C. Banks, who had jumped $25,000 bail and fled to this country after being convicted of a conspiracy charge involving the beating of a rival union leader.)

It seems that the Seafarers have, over a period of years, collected unreported "contributions" from alien seamen. These seamen work on high-paying ships that fly the American flag—ships bound, for example, to Vietnam. Some of the ships are owned by the government or chartered to the Pentagon's Military Sea Transportation Service. Many, perhaps most, of the alien seamen are not even members of the union. They are needed because many American seamen jump ship in ports such as Subic Bay, in the Philippines, or Yokohama, in Japan, or get sick, or simply want to return home.

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All told, the *Journal* estimates that several hundred thousand dollars have been contributed by these alien seamen to the union's political fund. Some individual "contributions" have been as high as $500 for a single voyage, with the donors not knowing the names of the candidates, nor the candidates the precise source of the funds. To say that these aliens "contribute" is a euphemism; they have little option in the matter, and indeed the whole procedure has the smell of a shakedown.

If American members of the union had been the sole contributors, then the 12,800 men would have had to contribute $39 each to account for the $497,338 which the union collected for political purposes through November 10 of last year. By contrast, the average steelworker or auto worker gives $1 a year for political activities. Under the Federal Corrupt Practices Act, public accounting is required only for contributions to candidates for President, Senator and Representative. But this year the Seafarers, in addition to such contributions, paid out $20,000 in speaking fees to Congressmen and $313,000 in campaign contributions to candidates for state and local office. Granted that the Seafarers have a vital interest in legislation—perhaps a more direct interest than other unions—still the way the union has been spending money in political campaigns now takes on special interest, in view of what is known about a major source of these funds. Union officials, of course, refuse comment. However, a combination of federal agencies, or possibly a Congressional committee, should be able to provide an answer to this question: what percentage of the funds so lavishly spent in politics by the union is contributed by alien seamen unable to vote in U. S. elections?

The Gadflies

One of the difficulties that confronts every conscientious reporter, even those imbued with the crusading spirit, is that most of the people he interviews are personally nice fellows and it is no pleasure to crucify them in print. The lower they are in the corporate or governmental hierarchy, moreover, the less point there is in giving them the works. The big shots, on the other hand, are not easy to reach and when the reporter does succeed in setting up an appointment, they often manage to persuade him of their good intentions, their duties to their stockholders (or the higher bureaucracy) and their own limited powers.

Ralph Nader is an exception to this journalistic weakness. His guiding principle is that the bigger they are, the harder they fall. He has been both forceful and fortunate. When he launched an attack on General Motors (first published in *The Nation*), some professional maligner in the company's employ tried the usual tactics, which backfired so badly that Nader became famous overnight.

Prominence has not mollified him in the least. He celebrated the new year by building a fire under the Federal Trade Commission, whose pants had been flammable for years, if anyone had had the temerity to apply a match. A team of seven investigators, organized by Nader, has completed a 185-page report calling for the resignation of Paul Rand Dixon, the head of the commission, and demanding a thorough overhaul of this agency's somnolent practices. According to John D. Morris, who reported on these salutary events in the January 6 *New York Times*, the investigators spent three months last summer interviewing officials and checking files, and such was their enthusiasm and persistence that they became known around the offices as "Nader's Raiders." Nader himself disclaims the honor; all he did, he says, was give the team, the members of which paid their own expenses, "some guidance and some leads." The active head is John Schultz, a 1968 graduate of the Yale Law School, which supplied a $500 grant. But without Nader's name, the project would probably never have been undertaken.

The FTC has been investigated before, but not by a band of law school guerrillas. In 1949, a commission headed by former President Herbert Hoover called the commission's record "disappointing" and said it had become "immersed in a multitude of petty problems." The Schultz team was more blunt; it said that "alcoholism, spectacular lassitude and office absenteeism, incompetence by the most modest standards and lack of commitment to their regulatory missions are rampant at these [high staff] levels."

Coming down to cases, the investigators accused the commission of relying too heavily on complaints by aggrieved consumers, instead of going out into the field, particularly in ghetto areas, or monitoring television commercials and the other kinds of hornswoggling that have become an accepted part of the American "free enterprise" system. Another commission failing is its touching confidence in "voluntary" enforcement by industry; too seldom, therefore, does it go into the courts and force compliance with reasonable standards of probity.

Recruiting practices are what one would expect. Partisan politics permeate the offices, graduates of Southern colleges are favored over those of Ivy League schools, and Negroes are hired "in their place," which is usually in the four lowest civil service categories.

This new and blunt report is refreshing and its importance is recognized by a long story in *Advertising Age* (January 6) under the caption "Naderites Blast FTC for Foot Dragging." A whole catalogue of frauds is listed—irritating mouthwashes, snide cigarette ads, subtle deception through image manipulation, and "the creation of demand through associations with sex, fear and power fantasies." The *Advertising Age* account is, in fact, much more severe than the one in the *Times*. And in another story in the same issue, *Advertising Age* reviews the gentle treatment of Geritol, which has been under a cease-and-desist order since December, 1967. What it amounts to is that Geritol's advertising agency experiments with formulas that will deceive the suckers as efficiently as before, while satisfying the lenient FTC requirements.

The Schultz-Nader report may signal the beginning of the rise of a new social ethic in the United States. A group of young lawyers and law professors, inspired by a successful crusader against the untrammeled evils of business, have here taken their social responsibilities seriously and put a negligent agency on the spot. One of them has the name of William Howard Taft IV. He does honor to his name, and so do all his colleagues to theirs.

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FIRE CONTROL AT THE UN

ANNE TUCKERMAN

The new year has brought a sense of renewed urgency to the task of finding a political settlement of the Middle East conflict, lest the rising spiral of terrorism and violence lead once more to a full-scale war. The Arab commando attack on the El Al plane at the Athens airport and the massive retaliatory blow inflicted by Israel on Lebanese civil aircraft—which was unanimously condemned by the Security Council—are but the latest manifestations of the guerrilla warfare which characterizes the present phase of the Palestine conflict. It has become obvious in diplomatic circles outside the Middle East that the situation must not be allowed to continue in this fateful direction.

A more effective political effort must be undertaken than a police precinct role (in the words of the representative of Brazil) now being played by the Security Council —it takes down complaints of incidents after they occur— and the disappointing mission of Ambassador Gunnar Jarring who, through no fault of his own, has been able to function up to now only as a letter box. The Soviet Union is especially eager for new initiatives because it finds itself in a position not unlike that of the United States in 1965, when Washington had to decide whether or not to increase its commitment in Vietnam. Moscow is being pressed by Cairo and other Arab states for additional military assistance, but is reluctant to supply them, lest they precipitate another Arab military venture. This time the Soviet Union might not escape involvement as easily as it did during the six-day war.

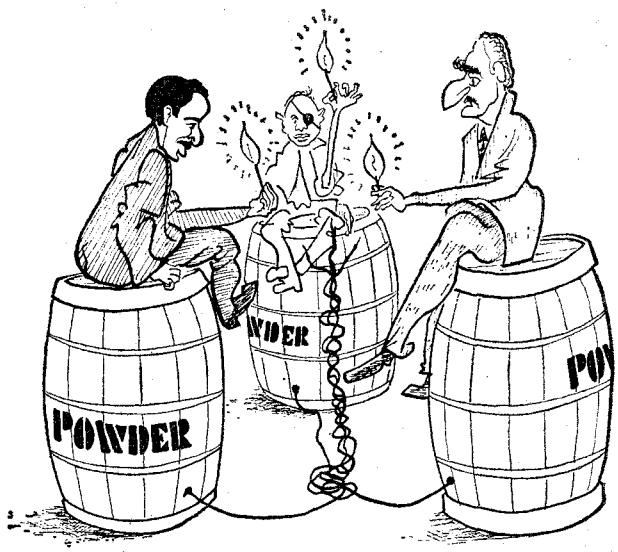
The alternative to this course is a political settlement, which Soviet diplomats have been urging on President Nasser with some measure of success. The natural framework for such a settlement is the Security Council resolution of November 22, 1967, which set forth among its basic principles the evacuation by Israel of recently acquired Arab territory, the cessation of Arab belligerency against Israel and freedom of navigation for all through Suez and the Straits of Tiran. (The reopening of the Suez Canal is a priority item for Soviet expansionism and its shipping of supplies to North Vietnam.)

The U.A.R. has announced its acceptance of this resolution as a "package deal," the timetable to be arranged by Ambassador Jarring. Israel continues to assert that each point must be the subject of agreements between the parties, in the presence, if necessary, of the United Nations mediator. Weary of losing diplomatic battles after winning military victories, Israel denies the right of any UN organ, or any outside power—or powers—to impose a settlement.

So far, the United States has backed the Israeli formula for direct negotiations between the parties, and the Johnson administration in its dying days was not likely to change its attitude. The Soviet Union hopes that under the new Administration a reorientation of American Middle East policy will produce a more "balanced" attitude that would translate itself into pressure on Israel by the withholding of arms. The Nixon team is proceeding very cautiously on this difficult terrain and is not likely to show its hand prematurely. However, the raid on Beirut airport —in response to which the United States for the first time condemned Israel—may provide a new element, because Lebanon is the only Arab country in the Middle East where a Western political and economic orientation survives—with American help. The government crisis brought about there by the Israeli attack may be followed by a dangerous upheaval of the sort only too common in the area.

In this climate of increasing tension, the United Nations —or rather its corridors and private chambers—provides an excellent ground for careful diplomatic moves between the big powers. President de Gaulle has revived an earlier suggestion—supported by U Thant—for a four-power conference or consultation to promote a settlement in the Middle East. The Soviet Union has emphasized the UN angle and is at present carrying on a major diplomatic campaign to have the permanent members of the Security Council (that is the same "four powers": the United States, the USSR, Britain and France) work out a formula to implement the November 22 resolution. As an additional enticement for support in international circles, Moscow is hinting at a territorial guarantee which would be exercised by four-power forces stationed, under the aegis of the Security Council, on both sides of the Arab-Israeli borders.

The detailed formulation of this program in carefully planned leaks is part of the war of nerves that Moscow is determined to wage on Israel, and which the Beirut episode has made easier. The big question that remains is whether or not President Nixon will decide to explore such schemes seriously. Will he be willing—and able—to exert pressure on the Israeli Government to accept a settlement on terms other than its own?



Backes, Nuremberg (W. Germany)

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COLOR IN THE CLASSROOM

THERE IS NO PANACEA

IVOR KRAFT

Mr. Kraft, formerly child development specialist with HEW, now professor at Sacramento State College, has written frequently for The Nation *on educational issues.*

At the start of this decade, the educational debate reached a peak of heat and complexity not previously matched for a generation. The elements principally contributing to the emotionalism were integration and compensatory education, with minor controversy supplied by busing and IQ measurements. Cultural deprivation was an evil to be stamped out: normal achievement was a standard difficult to define.

Recently something new has been added to the Babel of voices and viewpoints. It is called community control or decentralization of the inner-city or ghetto schools (although it can be applied across the board to all the large-city systems). The question arises: have we entered a new stage in the great educational debate of our era? In order to show that we have not, a short summary of how things currently stand in education must be provided for those who do not regularly attend the debate.

The movement to integrate the schools across class and race lines is seriously wounded and languishing, but it is not yet dead and never will be. Some promising steps have been taken in Syracuse. Berkeley, somewhat of a special case but with a Negro enrollment of 41 per cent, has chosen complete desegregation, with support from black moderates and militants. Communities as diverse as Galveston, Tex., and Pontiac, Mich., are giving the Berkeley approach serious consideration. Complete integration remains the only logical and morally defensible long-term solution of America's public school problem, which is a white and not a black problem.

Even when achieved, however, integration is no panacea. Many teachers are themselves inept in a racial situation, they harbor conscious and repressed prejudices, they are fearful of confronting race conflicts, they resent having to live with a whole new set of psychological tensions. The children too have problems. Even a 7-year-old can be a confirmed segregationist, and some black children are ashamed of their color, having been indoctrinated to a sense of inferiority. These and similar problems are tenacious, and it will take more than one generation to achieve truly creative racial harmony in our land, where racism has been the rule for 300 years.

In a previous *Nation* article ("Retreat to Separate but Equal," November 27, 1967) I mentioned some of the evidence then available as to the effectiveness of remedial programs in black schools—"compensatory education," it is called. The verdict then of ineffectiveness and failure stands after a year. The More Effective Schools (MES) program of New York City is all but forgotten. Early childhood education (Head Start) does some good, but not much. Oddly enough, remedial and compensatory programs are perhaps best justified in higher education, despite conventional wisdom to the contrary.

Few bother any longer with the old chestnuts about IQ and cultural deprivation. More alert researchers take it for granted that ethnic minority children have adequate intellectual endowment, and that it is a failure of the schools and not the children when this endowment does not surface. Preoccupations with once popular cultural deprivation ideas are seen as useless, since they are only crudely descriptive, not prescriptive.

We have learned to be wary of the power of the courts to redeem public education. The fourteen-year struggle to implement *Brown* vs. *Board of Education* has been sobering. Still, not all is lost. Now shaping up, in Michigan and Illinois, are test cases to challenge unfair state allocation procedures, which routinely reinforce fatter educational budgets for the suburbs at the expense of the needier central cities. [See "The Quality of Inequality" by Thomas P. Wilbur, *The Nation*, December 23.] This may result in more just apportionments, but it will by no means funnel enough money into the slum schools to resurrect them.

Seductive notions about the blitzkrieg power of nursery, elementary and secondary schools to lift the poor from poverty are also being abandoned. Those who run America's elementary and secondary schools have never dared to change the class and social order, and even if they did they would fail. Higher education is something else again, for by the end of the century more than 80 per cent of the citizens will attend colleges and universities. These adult student bodies and faculties will wield potentially great power for influencing America's chief institutions. Even now they command 35 per cent of the total educational budgets, and that percentage will grow. Today's wild and woolly student radicalism is not a transient digression from panty-raiding. Long overdue, it is an evidence of talent, conscience and emerging power (witness the influential anti-Vietnam activities of the campus).

But there is as yet no counterpart to such a power base at the elementary and secondary levels. There masses of children are being managed by a corps of teachers who are mediocre, meek and underpaid. Not only are they timid and prim in their middle-class status; they are inordinately protective of their professionalism, and unlike college faculties cannot be prodded and shamed into activism by their student constituencies.

While there is no power base for change in the elementary and secondary schools, there can be no doubt that a "power structure" rules the roost in American education. But it is a structure, not a monolithic center. The rulers are not an autocratic junta who impose their policies at will. The structure of power has three key elements, with conflicts among them: the fiscal authorities, the conservative boards of education and the mass teachers' organizations (NEA and AFT). There are certain peripheral fac-

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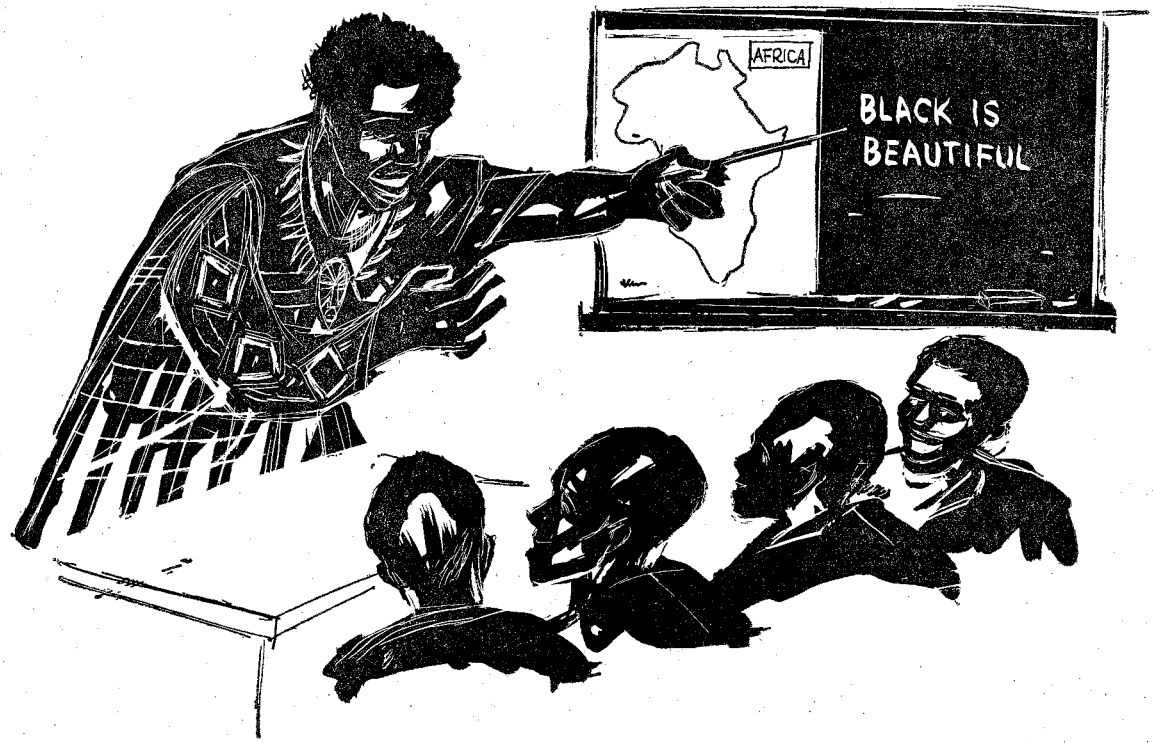

tors—including the federal government, the courts, the lay citizens' groups, the schools of education—but these enter into the power structure only insofar as they affect the allocation of the money, hiring or firing of superintendents, and the control of teachers.

Does anything unite all elements of the educational power structure? Yes, briefly it is this: a desire for docile, conformist schoolrooms (law and order) which will successfully process the individual child through his 16th or 17th year, at which point he will enter either the college, the labor force or the armed services. All else, including intellectual achievement, spiritual growth, creative exploration, optimum development, freedom and joy, are sacrificed when they interfere with a lawful and orderly processing of children through the grades. The fiscal authorities, the boards, the administrators and teachers are united in dread of anything that may rock the boat of public elementary and secondary education with its $34 billion budget, 45 million pupils and 2 million teachers.

This does not mean that American public education is a wasteland of unmitigated mediocrity and conformity, as we often hear. Not quite so. A power structure rules the roost, all right, but it does not say where each egg shall be laid. Schooling can be deadly, yet there is something so intrinsically healthy about learning and teaching, at root it is such a nonconforming and individualized process, that it is bound to make allowances for human yearnings and exuberance. Quite a few children are doing good things, under decent teachers, in the best suburban schools.

Moreover, one tricky admission must be made in favor of the power structure—it is tricky, because the point is so easily misunderstood in the absence of a thorough discussion. Simply put, it is that a minimum degree of law and order must prevail in the schools if education is to go forward. Freedom, respect for the child, joy are simply not enough. Children must be told on occasion to shut up, and they must do so. They must not constantly bullyrag one another and their teachers. And when managed in groups they absolutely must learn to read and write by the 4th grade, otherwise all else reduces to futility.

With respect to the inner-city public schools, it is folly to romanticize the renascent element in ghetto unrest. Black is beautiful, but the ghetto is not, nor are its schools. America has never had a noble poor, black or white. In America, the goal has always been to get out of poverty as rapidly as possible. And when masses of the children of the poor are crowded into squalid, inferior schools, they do not behave like noble learners but like troubled, suppressed kids who reflect the wretchedness of their environment and upbringing. Bertrand Russell, who for a number of years ran an experimental school—and not for slum children—learned early that freedom and respect for the troubled child was not a cure-all:

> Whatever may have been the cause, many of the children were cruel and destructive. To let the children go free was to establish a reign of terror, in which the strong kept the weak trembling and miserable. A school is like the world: only government can prevent brutal violence. And so I found myself, when the children were not at lessons, obliged to supervise them continually to stop cruelty. We divided them into three groups, bigs, middles, and smalls. One of the middles was perpetually ill-treating the smalls, so I asked him why he did it. His answer was: "The bigs hit me, so I hit the smalls; that's fair." And he really thought it was.

Does this sound like a plea for law and order? It isn't. Russell and his wife put freedom, creativity and joy above law and order, but they realized that to get the former they did require a minimum of the latter.

Ghetto children are not maimed for life, and they can learn. But the atmosphere of the inner-city slum school is

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profoundly alien to learning. Community control will not dissipate this alienation. Only massive budgets—three and four times those now available—and extraordinarily dedicated and wise teachers (so rare that when one comes along, he spends a year in the classroom, writes a book, and then moves on to something else) can salvage the inner-city school. That is why, during the past decade, those who have known the score about public education have never been taken in by crash programs, compensatory education, teaching machines and schemes of reorganization; but have insisted from the start that only an end to class and racial isolation in the schools will initiate a regeneration of public education in America.

Community control does not bring with it increased budgets. That is obvious. But neither does it bring with it a new breed of teacher. The majority of black teachers are products of third-rate black teachers' colleges; their chief aim in life is to get away from the ghetto, not to sanctify it. Their major skills, alas, are those of custodianship. To be sure, here and there certain faddish devices will be introduced by community leaders, but children are not so easily conned. Dashikis, natural hair-dos, soul music in the cafeteria, and introductory Swahili all have some symbolic significance, but the children will still leave these schools unable to read and write. Moreover, dashikis and the rest can easily be absorbed into the educational establishment, which in its day has absorbed jitterbugging, sex education, conversational Chinese and the miniskirt. There is nothing in community control which threatens the white bourgeoisie, the black bourgeoisie, the Ford Foundation or a really clever union leader.

Speaking of union leaders and the Ford Foundation, a word is in order about the recent New York City fracas. It is instructive, but one must not generalize from it to other big-city systems. New York's educational Armageddon, still inconclusive, is unique. No other city has such a massive system, such a Byzantine educational bureaucracy, a union so militant and sure of itself, or an ethnic confrontation so intricately explosive as that between a 50 per cent Jewish teaching corps within black metropolitan communities numbering nearly 2 million. When to this is added inadequate budgets and raging politics, it becomes obvious that the New York situation does not invite solutions; it encourages survival tactics to avoid annihilation. The teachers fought, or thought they fought, for basic security, and who can blame them? A powerless and enraged community, long deluded by spurious promises of integration, fought for some measure of power, and who can blame *them*? The Ford Foundation and the bureaucracy were caught in between, but they were less blameless. They must have known that they were inviting chaos. Like the wily British promising the Holy Land to the Jews and the Arabs, it is as if they had got together and said: "Let's give them everything they want, and then wash our hands of the whole thing." Of course, not one got what he wanted.

McGeorge Bundy, in offering his scheme for New York City, said that it had nothing to do with power, and everything to do with better education for children. It is precisely the other way around. Assuming that we get various decentralization plans for the hundreds of inner-city schools of New York, Detroit, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., and elsewhere—and it will come easier in most places than in New York—after the dust settles the schools will continue very much as they were before. Here and there a courageous and enterprising community board may recruit some really fresh blood to staff its schools, and there will be the usual honeymoon episodes. That is no different from what we have been getting occasionally from reform boards of education. But in the end the old pedagogical creeds will prevail; the slightly modified power structure will settle into a slightly modified rut. There will be certain redistributions of power and, as we all know, power is its own excuse for being. Certainly more blacks, Puerto Ricans and Mexican Americans will become principals and administrators, as they should. But this will merely repeat a phenomenon made familiar by the war on poverty: the slogan says maximum feasible participation of the poor, but the outcome is more upward mobility for the minority middle classes. That is good, but will it make the children well taught?

As for the somber and extreme argument that decentralization and community control will sink us deeper into the mud of segregation, producing the permanent institutionalization of inferior black schools, that view is probably no longer defensible. It is hard to imagine the black inner-city schools as being much worse than they are today. The trend is toward separate but equal, but community control is a response to this trend rather than its cause. Nor is community control necessarily hostile to integration in the long run. Under present circumstances we must honor black America's cry for self-determination; but community control or no community control, we must never agree to apartheid concepts of "black" and "white" education. There is only education. It is the responsibility of white America to keep alive the ideal of integration, and to prove its integrity, despite all frustrations.

It will not be easy. According to an AP release of August 7, the Secretary of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare offered this "realistic" advice:

> I think we have to be realistic. In a large number of big-city areas we have a lot of neighborhoods that are going to be completely black. If we can have good schools and good police protection, maybe that's better than to have fear and riots. And maybe another generation will have to deal with integration.

Whether or not this is realism, it is obviously not going to hasten America along the path of integration. And if this is what amounts to the progressive viewpoint under a Democratic administration—a view of "fear and riots" as the ultimate abominations, and a conception of "good schools" as being in the same order of goodness as "good police protection"—then it is foolhardy to think that Richard M. Nixon and his crew will hold high the banner of racial integration in schools, or anywhere else.

Thus, it is now impossible to quarrel with the determination of black militants and moderates that if the schools are to be black—and ever blacker—they are going to be black controlled. That is honest; that is fair. That is why community control deserves one little cheer.

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LIFE ON THE LINE

CONVERSATION WITH CLEAVER

HENRY E. WEINSTEIN

Mr. Weinstein, a third-year law student at the University of California, has written of the Huey Newton case for the Daily Californian *and of a student delegation's visit to Governor Reagan on the issue of Eldridge Cleaver's lectures at the university for the* Sacramento Bee.

> You sit on your cold, steel-mattress bunk and watch a cockroach crawl out from under the filthy commode and you don't kill it. You envy the roach as you watch it crawl out under the cell door.
>
> *Johnny Cash at Folsom Prison*

Berkeley

On the evening of November 21, six days before he was scheduled to return to prison as a result of parole revocation, Eldridge Cleaver made his last public speech at California Hall in San Francisco. He was visibly shaken as he stepped to the rostrum and commenced by saying, "I'm kinda stuck for words tonight." It was plain that Cleaver was more than upset by the prospect of going back to prison. He was "freaked out" in a manner akin to Rubashov in Koestler's *Darkness at Noon.*

Cleaver no doubt had been reflecting on how things could have been different. After all, he didn't have to become involved with the Black Panthers, or he could have left the group when the heat was turned on. He could certainly count on making enough from *Soul on Ice* and his writing for *Ramparts* to live comfortably. Without attempting to deify him, it suffices to say that Eldridge Cleaver is not that sort of man.

As I entered Eldridge Cleaver's house on the 24th of November and watched the double-bolted door close behind me I was more than ever impressed by the fact that Cleaver had made a leap that is characteristic of the true revolutionary. He had put his life on the line for his beliefs. His words transcended mere verbiage and were continually translated into action.

And just before I left his house that afternoon Cleaver provided an insight into his thoughts at a moment when he must have been undergoing some serious self-examination. My roommate Dan Lang, who had accompanied me that afternoon, asked Cleaver if he would autograph his copy of *Soul on Ice.* Cleaver smiled and responded warmly as he inscribed the following:

> For Dan Lang. On a Sunday afternoon, the Sunday of Sundays for me. Perhaps my last Sunday. I don't know. No matter what, however, the truth is still the truth and the struggle must and will go on. All power to the people. The spirit of the people is greater than the man's technology.

In the preceding hour we had taped the following interview:

Weinstein: This fall there was considerable controversy over your participation in a class on racism at the University of California. What have your experiences been as a guest lecturer in the course on "Dehumanization and Regeneration in the American Social Order"?

Cleaver: The dialogue that we have been able to develop in the classroom has been satisfactory. The discussions have been fruitful. The conditions in the class are good but we have been hampered by political interference, for instance by the regents and the Governor. It is, of course, unfortunate that the students may not get credit for the course. They will simply have to balance that against the realization that they have come into contact with some new ideas. I would also comment that the class has been very helpful to me in developing my ideas.

Weinstein: Many of your public statements and also comments in *Soul on Ice* indicate that you think education and work with young people is extremely important. In this context what is the relationship of the Black Panther Party to black student union groups on high school and college campuses?

Cleaver: We have had good relationships with the black student unions at local high schools; indeed some of them have changed their name to Black Panther student unions.

The situation on the college campuses has been different. Before forming the Black Panther Party, Bobby Seale and Huey Newton tried to do some organizing at Merritt College, where they were students. They started the Soul Students group at Merritt. They discovered that there are problems with starting a revolutionary movement among blacks at the college level because almost all black college students are from the black bourgeoisie.

The black middle class are the most alienated from their roots; when the idea of black consciousness began to develop they had the furthest to go. Curiously enough, though, you also had the development of what is called "cultural nationalism" and some of this was a form of black racism.

The black students now in high school find it much easier to relate to the revolutionary ideas than do the black college students. When they get to college they will wash away this regressive phenomenon.

Another problem has been the compartmentalization of black college students. They have been viewed as a separate entity, but they must be seen as part of the larger community. They must be united to that larger community so that these groups can function together. This goes for white students as well. They have compartmentalized themselves too. Liberation must come and can only come from the entire community, not just from the colleges.

Weinstein: Huey Newton has been imprisoned; and you are due to go back to jail in a few days. Thus a significant portion of the leadership of the Black Panther Party will have been put out of circulation in one form or other. What have you been doing to develop new leadership?

Cleaver: This is obviously an important problem. We are continuously trying to develop new leadership in the party. We have some people ready to take over if the cur-

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rent leadership is put in jail, or something similar, but not enough. We want the Black Panther Party to be a self-perpetuating group, not a one-man organization.

Weinstein: It has been asserted that one of the major problems of the Panthers and other such militant groups is infiltration from hostile organizations, such as the police. What difficulties have you had with *provocateurs*?

Cleaver: There is no question but that the pigs have attempted to infiltrate our group. This is something we have been aware of for a long time and we try to cope with it. For obvious tactical reasons I can't go into details, but I will say that *provocateurs* were involved with that recent gas station holdup.

Weinstein: The mass media play a large role in shaping attitudes about race relations. The major television networks and newspapers are often critical of black militants. In this regard, what do you think is the role of the Black Panther paper, in terms of both the black and white communities?

Cleaver: The establishment press has a monopoly on the dissemination of information in the United States. This monopoly can be broken. It is absolutely essential that we develop our own media. Political movements and political organizations need media both for ideological reasons and for the interpretation of events. In this regard, the establishment press is unreliable and must be viewed as an enemy. Our own media can serve to further communication between blacks and whites. Indeed our own media will serve as the "glue" that holds the movement together.

Weinstein: Do you think that the material presented in the Panther paper has a similar impact on most of its readers or is subject to varying interpretations?

Cleaver: The Black Panther paper is not fully developed as yet. We have had many problems with the paper. I am the editor but I do not have the time that really needs to be given to the paper. There certainly has not been a standardization of much of the material in the paper. As a matter of fact, there have been many contradictions in the positions taken in the paper. Part of this is because of time pressures and the fact that we don't have uniform editing processes.

R. Cobb

Some of these contradictions in the paper have been detrimental; they have had an adverse effect on the goals of the Black Panther Party. We need a full-time staff, but there are financial problems. And the paper must appeal to some people who are politically unsophisticated.

We need the paper though, and given all the problems we do have it is still better than nothing.

Weinstein: Many individuals do not seem to understand the meaning of some of your rhetoric. Phrases such as "Free Huey or the Sky's the Limit," for example, have been interpreted in several ways. Could you elaborate upon this?

Cleaver: When we use an expression like "Mickey Mouse Reagan" or "Donald Duck Rafferty," I think it is clear that this is a put-down; it is meant to be derisive.

The phrase, "Free Huey or the Sky's the Limit," is also clear, but has broader ramifications. When we say this we mean that Huey must be set free or the country will be destroyed; there should be no misunderstanding about this.

But you also have to consider that when we were saying this before Huey's trial we were engaged in psychological warfare. We were striving for a mass mobilization. We were attempting to educate the public. The establishment uses psychological warfare too. They were trying to railroad Huey Newton into the gas chamber. The Black Panther Party countered by threats and by focusing attention on what was going on in that courthouse. We kept Huey out of the gas chamber, but he still is not free. This is due to the effects that establishment propaganda had on the jury.

"The Sky's the Limit" is an old American term; people should understand it. They just would rather interpret it differently. The police felt that they understood what we meant and that's why 15,000 National Guardsmen were called up, ready to move at the end of the trial. They expected a certain sort of reaction and wanted to wipe out the Black Panther Party. But right after the end of the trial we told all the Panthers to stay off the street that night. Huey said we should carry the legal case as far as possible. This freaked out the cops; two of them shot up our office. This was another form of psychological warfare on our part and it worked to some extent.

This psychological warfare must now move in other directions. But it must be remembered that our actions are always geared to our position and resources. If we could take Huey out of jail forcefully we would, but right now this simply is not possible. So it becomes a question of getting into a position to implement what you have to do. And that is why we still mean it when we say "Free Huey or the Sky's the Limit."

Weinstein: Is your paper staffed solely by blacks, and if so how does this fit in with your coalition with the Peace and Freedom Party?

Cleaver: The paper is put out solely by black people. We do, however, print articles by white people in the paper. I think that this is a policy to be encouraged because the final movement must unite whites and blacks if

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we are really going to deal with the problems that confront us.

Weinstein: What is the relationship of the Black Panther Party to organizations such as CORE, SNCC and the Mississippi Freedom Labor Union?

Cleaver: We have no relationship to CORE. As far as I am concerned they have become part of the power structure. This concept of "black capitalism" is merely part of the welfare-capitalist phase of oppression. It is simply another example of indirect control of blacks by the power structure. The forms of exploitation have been modified so as to continue to deceive the oppressed classes.

SNCC was essentially a movement rather than an organization. SNCC never had a membership as such. To do what has to be done in this country you have to include the masses in the machinery of your organization; SNCC couldn't do this. Lately, SNCC has been attempting to make this transition from a movement to an organization.

The movement orientation is certainly a large part of black history in the United States. Such an orientation is now obsolete. There is a pressing need to proceed to the organizational stage.

We need national organizations. We must unite all the regional organizations of blacks, even though they are acting to solve local problems. The Mississippi Freedom Labor Union, which you referred to, is a case in point. At present such a group can have only a transitory effect.

We need a national organization to unite the various efforts into one. That is one of the things the Black Panther Party has been attempting to do. This national organization, however, need not be the Black Panther Party. We would join a better group if such a change becomes necessary. Certain members of SNCC fell into a "reactionary trap" in this regard, and were reluctant to effect certain mergers because of their desire to maintain themselves in positions of power. What we need is merger rather than internecine conflict.

Weinstein: There has been a lot of talk about the potential for a revolutionary movement in this country which would unite blacks, students and poor whites. Yet what seems to be happening is not a revolution on the Left, but a revolution on the Right with lower, middle-class whites rallying behind the standard of George Wallace. Do you see this development as a serious problem?

Cleaver: The people who are supporting Wallace are simple-minded and politically naive; they do not understand the problems facing this country. When Wallace renounces the Establishment these people respond to him. But I do not feel they are really sympathetic to his alternatives, so I have no long-range fear of Wallace.

It requires a shrewd mind, however, to understand, deal with, and break through racism in this country. At the present time you have working-class people who are basically comfortable and who won't come into the streets: this is the problem of the Left. Although these people have jobs and are relatively comfortable, they are miserable and dissatisfied. They are suffering spiritually as a result of the oppressive lies that have been imposed upon them. This deterioration of their condition is increasing. Politically conscious people have to make these working-class people see how racism is affecting their lives and project a Left alternative to these problems. That is what it will take to get these "comfortable people" to move.

Weinstein: In recent lectures that you have given at Berkeley and in a current issue of the Black Panther newspaper you have talked at length about the origin and nature of "ethnic power." You have talked about Mayor Alioto evolving from Al Capone, Police Chief Cahill evolving from Machine-Gun Kelly, and Arthur Goldberg evolving from Arnold Rothstein. Although people weren't talking about Jewish, Irish and Italian power the way people are talking about Black Power today, a similar process was taking place. In terms of this sort of group consciousness, what direction do you see the Black Power movement taking?

Cleaver: We don't want black people to go through the melting pot and perpetuate the system. If this happens, black people will simply be functional lackeys and torpedo the possibility of black liberation. We want to change the system.

The melting-pot theory is the basic myth of the United States. This theory defines the United States strategy and tactics develop from the definitions created by this theory. The melting-pot myth has created an artificial "oneness" that obscures many problems.

The type of ethnocentrism that has developed in the United States is not a good thing if we want the earth to continue to exist. It was once a social apparatus created to survive certain sorts of hostility. It was a protective device. But times have changed, and we need non-ethnocentric people who are able to identify with humanity in a broad sense. This sort of unity is the only way to solve the problems we have here in the United States and in the world.

For example, the Irish, as an oppressed group, used to put pressure on the power structure. But eventually the Irish moved into the system, and their ethnic loyalties soon were manipulated by politicians. The Irish are now among the bourgeoisie, but they are still manipulated by ethnic loyalties. Now these loyalties perpetuate the *status quo*, and thus many of the Irish are now being manipulated by their enemies. This is indicative of a basic development among ethnic groups in this country—that the ethnics who are in a better position manipulate the less fortunate in their own group.

Weinstein: Revolutions are usually brought about by individuals who feel desperate about their circumstances. As a class students are comfortable, at least in a material sense, as contrasted to blacks. Will coalitions between white students and groups such as the Black Panther Party ultimately break down because of this difference?

Cleaver: Students are not politically naive in contrast to the white adults we were just talking about. They have a social consciousness. Therefore it doesn't matter if they are well-off materially because their values are affronted by what they see in society. Throughout history we can see revolutions that were led by people who were well-off but had an intellectual and spiritual motivation.

Thus far, students have pursued a course of radical dissent but not that of revolutionary action. It has been like an extended field trip to upset their elders and it has not gone far enough. The students have stopped short of

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what is needed. They probably won't be willing to take up guns and execute the regents, as they deserve.

The revolutionaries of the future may come from the students when they go out into the world. Some will not be able to find their place in the outside world. But the foundation for a real revolutionary movement is not here yet.

Weinstein: At the present time the Black Panther Party has a coalition with the Peace and Freedom Party. One of the major dilemmas facing such coalitions is what sort of critical role the whites will play in terms of what the blacks are doing. Since the National Conference on New Politics (NCNP), held two summers ago, what we have seen for the most part is not viable, working coalitions but whites acquiescing to the blacks, somewhat because of guilt feelings, rather than offering constructive criticism. What effort does this have on such coalitions?

Cleaver: The guilt problem is part of the racial heritage of America. But such guilt feelings make many people nonfunctional from our point of view. This stance of acquiescence can be detrimental if a black is advocating a bad program. Such a white cannot distinguish between what different blacks are saying; all he recognizes is that a black is saying it. Motivation that is spurred by guilt doesn't make for reliable whites, and we have had many problems with people of this type.

Weinstein: In a recent issue of the Black Panther paper, Huey Newton issued a position paper discussing the nature of the BPP-PFP coalition. One point which he made was that while white radicals used psychedelic drugs extensively, blacks should not do so. How do you account for the apparently different types of discipline that are needed in groups of black militants and white radicals?

Cleaver: The Black Panther can't be effective in dealing with the power structure if its members are high or drunk. Some of the people getting high will have to stop. I realize that some people will react to this by calling us the "New Puritans" but it simply will have to be done. People will have to begin to relate to a sort of revolutionary morality.

Drugs are one of the means that people have used to escape, but we must concentrate intensively on revolutionary struggle. Sex and LSD can't be used any more as escapes, and the leadership must set an example.

When we first started our police patrols this was not much of a problem. The desire to be with the cadre was the source of discipline. The people wanted to "be in shape" because they knew this was necessary if they were carrying guns on the patrols. Morality flowed from activity.

This has lapsed for some people because the patrols have ceased. The notion of morality from activity must be recaptured. The source of this, of course, is political awareness. We conduct political education classes in the Black Panther Party. Developing political awareness is hard to achieve but we are making progress.

The white radical movement is at a different stage, and thus their concepts of morality can be expected to be different. When the white movement moves into the stage of organizational activity they will see the wisdom of the sort of morality I have been talking about. It will develop naturally.

Weinstein: According to the current status of your parole revocation case you are due to return to prison on Wednesday. What will happen on that day?

Cleaver: I am supposed to call my parole officer at 8:30 in the morning on Wednesday. I am planning on continuing my daily life as normal. I will give my scheduled lecture on Tuesday at the University of California. We will have to wait and see.

Weinstein: Any concluding remarks?

Cleaver: I may be cut off from the movement here. I would encourage people to develop an intransigent attitude toward the enemy. They should view the enemy and his efforts with contempt.

Pain should incense us all the more to speed up the movement for liberation. But the people also must use their minds to understand the enemy and his tactics, to develop counter-tactics, and to break his strategy.

Let the struggle continue. It should intensify, come hell or high water.

I'm not going to say good-by because I'm not gone.

SCHOLARSHIP OR COMMITMENT

A HASSLE OF HISTORIANS

JAMES GILBERT

Mr. Gilbert, a member of the history faculty at the University of Maryland, is at present a visiting lecturer at Teachers College, New York. He is the author of Writers and Partisans: A History of Literary Radicalism in America, 1900-1950 *(John Wiley).*

Milling around in the corridors of New York's Statler-Hilton during the American Historical Association meeting, December 28-30, thousands of graduate students and professors must have felt that this was Mayor Daley's revenge. The meeting, originally scheduled for Chicago, was moved to New York after a strong demand by the membership not to convene in the city that had shown the world the grim guts of the Democratic Party. Enormous confusion resulted from overcrowded halls and elevators which seemed to run nonstop from the basement to the roof. Long lines of graduate students waited patiently to use house phones, that didn't always work, trying to establish get-it-yourself job interviews. Interesting positions were available, of course, but these were filled by a process resembling the National Football League player draft. And for those few superstar historians, always looking for a new job, there was the ritualistic greeting which has be-

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come almost like a fraternal handshake: "Are you happy at . . . ?" The skillful answer blends present dissatisfaction and a suggestion of wanderlust with a denial of disloyalty to the current alma mater—into one word.

Aside from an unusually heavy dose of frenzy, this convention was most notable for its politics and for the efforts to organize a caucus of radical historians. "We all know that something is wrong with the AHA," claimed Arthur Waskow, "but we don't know what it is." The American Historical Association is one of the largest liberal organizations in the country. But its political leanings are incidental to its function, and the result has been a liberalism of indifference. The Association publishes a journal, acts as a clearing house for jobs, and holds conventions which are both reunions and scholarly events. Behind these benign activities, however, there lies the power of numbers of men who command the attention of a great many students and who carry publishing houses into the black with the purchases they require for courses. As in other professions, the AHA reflects the activities of its members. Scholarly papers presented at such conventions sample the work being done in the field, whether radical or conservative. The search for originality insures attention to such ideas.

The current convention suggested, however, that the detachment of the historical profession may not be permanent. The political function of the historian, whether he likes it or not, is up for grabs. He is under pressure from students to make his work reveal something about the nature of social change. And often he is concerned to reconstruct the past because of his malaise about the present nature of American society.

Such attitudes provided the gist of the panel discussion on Saturday night, December 28, of the relationship of the historical profession to politics. However irrelevant or disastrous it may seem to the younger generation of historians, the cold war showed itself alive and well in the mind of Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., who chaired the meeting. Countenancing the decision to quit Chicago, Schlesinger suggested that historians also might take a swipe at the Russians for their invasion of Czechoslovakia by refusing to attend, or if in attendance, by protesting, at the International Congress for Historical Sciences in Moscow two years hence. The more traditional position was expressed by AHA president, John K. Fairbank, who suggested that no political position ought to be implied in the organization's activities or in the selection of convention sites. Perhaps he understood, as Schlesinger did not, that if it were a policy to make symbolic protests against countries for the evils of their foreign policies, very few meetings could be convened anywhere. Both Schlesinger's and Fairbank's remarks were wide of the focus provided by the most important speech of the evening. Christopher Lasch's appeal to historians to involve themselves with new ideas and with unused concepts, his demand that they stop being ideologues for the *status quo,* brought the question of history and politics to the point where it belonged.

Lasch's suggestions were echoed in efforts to organize a radical caucus within the AHA. Perhaps, since historians are among the last of the large social sciences to produce a radical caucus, it was inevitable that there should be a twin birth. The reason for two competing caucuses stems primarily from the growing separation between scholarship and political activism within the university. The aim of radical historians can no longer be merely the confrontation of conservative ideas and establishments. They must deal also with the problems which beset the whole Left today.

The first radical caucus was held on December 28, sponsored primarily by graduate students from the University of Wisconsin. Before an audience of about 700, several speakers chided the AHA for some of the statements of its past presidents, defended the usefulness of scholarship, and called for the creation of some sort of formal organization. After twenty minutes or so of groping around, avoiding arguments and issues, a newsletter was established—in lieu of further talk. As the audience melted away, some to publishers' cocktail parties, the meeting folded. It looked as if the scholarly Left might once more paste over its splits and factions with newsprint.

But the second caucus on Sunday, December 29, revealed that the first meeting had been merely a dress rehearsal. A smaller audience heard Eugene Genovese, Christopher Lasch and Helmut Gruber tackle the problem of radical scholarship. Lasch's remarks best caught the meaning of the present dilemma in personal terms. The breakdown of liberalism, he argued, had destroyed the rationale for the disjointed work which historians were doing. Isolated monographic studies could still be written in pursuit of truth; nothing diminished their value, but the historian himself had difficulty seeing the relevance of his work to social change. The meeting itself was testimony to the desire of historians to alter this situation. To overcome this isolation, Lasch proposed a larger, national organization whose aims would go beyond the academic world—an organization to which scholars could contribute their work and political activities.

This translation of the acknowledged split between scholarship and activism into political terminology stated what was unsaid on the previous afternoon. As Eugene Genovese put it, the issue was whether to defend the university and work within it to transform it according to the ideals it glibly asserts, or by a revolutionary act to confront it and expose its links to other institutions in society. The issue was between professionalism and 100 per cent radicalism, even though most positions were between these two extremes.

Behind Genovese's statement was the question of the meaning and uses of radical scholarship. The radical professor, because of his successes in working within the structure of the university, is obviously on the defensive. The internal structure and the exterior relationships of that institution have all been called into question by the left-wing students, who demand that the historian make his work relevant. The results of such demands have so far been inconclusive; much of the dialogue among scholars has broken on the definition of terms. Relevancy, radicalism, even professionalism, are words sufficiently ambiguous to serve as slogans for different programs of educational reforms.

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However, some clear points are emerging from the confusion. Historians have been asked to write about the past with an eye to the present and the future. They have been asked, and rightfully, to deal with American history as if it were made by all men, not just by elites. They have been reminded that they must illuminate not only the textual obscurities of New England theologians or literary intellectuals but also the shadowy and insubstantial record left by the inarticulate. But that is not all. Historians have also been asked to create in their own work a guide to a better future. Here all detachment falls away, and scholars find themselves caught in the dilemma of their own success in the university, and confronted by their own students.

New Left history with all its incoherence and its internal squabbles, is today established in American historiography, and is fast producing an impressive collection of works. Whatever it means—which is at least several things—New Left history has contributed some permanent conceptions to understanding the American past. It makes its way, even though stumbling and blocked at times. Those, for example, who scoffed ten years ago at new interpretations of American foreign policy, generally do so now, not to students but in the privacy of their own generations. Yet the very success (and first signs of aging) has brought New Left scholarship to an impasse.

Sunday's meeting expressed a whole range of attitudes about the role of historical scholarship—from defense of its present circumstances to one lone call that the historian quit the university and organize for the revolution. In all the positions, one tendency is clear: a great deal is being asked of the historian—perhaps far more than he is capable of as a scholar. If he quits historical research and leaves the university, he gives up the battle for the past. Yet he cannot remain oblivious to the demands of the present. Even if he cannot predict the future, he can suggest a great deal about the process of social change. He can teach about the present by learning about the past. But more important, if the historian is really committed to teaching and to the ideals of education he must challenge careerism, outmoded classroom forms, formal and inhumane social relations with students. The ideals of scholarship and teaching need no more defense than the ideal of the university. But what these ideals mean in reality is yet a mystery. At a minimum, however, the defense of the university ideal must mean an assault upon the educational process as it exists today, and an end to pitting students and faculty members against one another, and to compartmentalizing and isolating knowledge. Historians have often compartmentalized their lives, have spurned students, have pursued careers, have published and then perished as human beings. It is not the AHA that has created this situation. No organization or profession is in the long run much worse than its members.

CIVIL RIGHTS

NIXON'S FIRST TEST

GARY ORFIELD

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If Richard Nixon as President fulfills his Southern campaign pledges, he will dismantle the civil rights enforcement machinery which, since 1964, has brought much of the South to the brink of a successful social revolution. While public attention has been focused on riots and black militancy, federal power has seriously weakened some of the main props of Southern segregation. At a time when many in the North are concluding that integration is impossible, it is working well in much of the South. A permanent transformation of Southern institutions seems possible if federal pressure can be maintained for a few years more. The choice must be made by the new President and a few members of his Cabinet.

Victory for civil rights in the long Congressional battles was but a first step. The declarations of national policy embodied in the 1964 and 1968 Civil Rights Acts and the 1965 Voting Rights Act gain meaning only as the resources of the Executive bureaucracies are committed to forcing action on issues of great political sensitivity.

The new Administration's decision on the hotly debated issue of the school desegregation guidelines provided by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare will be the first clear indication of Mr. Nixon's intentions. His Administration will confront a spectrum of other civil rights questions, ranging from voting rights and equal employment to open housing. In most cases, decisions will be incremental, gradually determining a policy through key appointments, budget decisions and determinations on individual cases. On the central symbolic issue of schools, however, President Nixon will be faced with a clear policy choice on an unambiguous deadline.

More than a year ago, in October, 1967, Southern school officials were given until September, 1969, to comply with the 1954 Supreme Court decision and the 1964 Civil Rights Act. After fifteen years of gradualism, the Johnson administration set that date for ending federal subsidies to local governments that continue to defy the Constitution. Richard Nixon has threatened to suspend the deadline and permit indefinite continuance of separate and unequal education in the Deep South.

Mr. Nixon describes himself as a "liberal" on civil rights. In his victory statement he promised to "bring us together." His commitment to racial justice, however, has been heavily discounted by those most vitally concerned—

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the black voters. The day after the election the nation's leading black newspaper, the *Chicago Defender*, covered its front page with a drawing of a weeping Martin Luther King, tearing up his 1963 Lincoln Memorial speech that told of his dream of victory over racial bias.

Southern power in Congress has traditionally forced blacks to look to the President and the courts for protection of civil rights. The conventional wisdom of American politics is that the President is particularly sensitive to the interests of the Negro community because of its great significance in the city vote of the large swing states where national races are often decided. In the 1968 election, however, Nixon demonstrated that at the present level of racial polarization it is possible to win the Presidency, while writing off the black vote in the South and in the metropolitan centers. No President in recent times has owed less politically to the black community.

But Nixon is a minority President and he must decide whether he will attempt to construct the majority he needs to govern and to be re-elected through a moderate strategy of racial accommodation, or through a conservative approach that appeals to Wallace supporters. The "Southern strategy" of his campaign suggests a preference for the latter course, and an ominous confirming sign is his appointment of John Mitchell, architect of that strategy, as Attorney General. Washington columnists Evans and Novak have recently reported that Harry Dent, Strom Thurmond's understudy in South Carolina politics, will coordinate school desegregation policy from his position on Nixon's White House staff.

In Southern speeches during his campaign, Nixon strongly hinted that he might abandon the bipartisan coalition committed to completing the task of desegregating Southern schools, as mandated by the 1964 Civil Rights Act. While George Wallace lashed into HEW bureaucrats, and Hubert Humphrey called for full enforcement, Nixon took a confusing middle position that satisfied many Southern conservatives without fatally damaging his support by progressive white Republicans. His statements permitted Strom Thurmond to promise the South that Nixon would retreat on the school issue. The GOP carried five states of the old Confederacy, including Senator Thurmond's South Carolina. Nixon's political debt to Thurmond is large, and it is clear that Thurmond will ask the new President to do by Executive fiat what the South Carolina Senator could not achieve in the Senate.

In his first Southern television address, Nixon implied that he did not believe in withholding federal aid to force desegregation, and that he felt that the 1964 Civil Rights Act could be carried out under a system called "freedom of choice." The phrase sounds democratic enough, but it describes an approach to desegregation based on the assumption that local authorities have no legal responsibility to end racially separate school systems. "Freedom of choice" provides that each student be offered an opportunity to transfer once a year. It is based on the theory that the Supreme Court did not order actual integration in 1954 but only an end to some of the formalities of legally enforced segregation. In practice, it permits localities to maintain separate black and white school systems indefinitely, the constitutional right to an equal education being made available only to those families willing to take the risk involved in openly challenging the caste system. It is as if, for example, the constitutional right to freedom of assembly were extended only to those willing to demand it publicly from a hostile local group bitterly opposed to free assembly and dominating both the local government and the local economy. After extensive trials the courts have found that "freedom of choice" generally fails to meet the requirements of the Constitution; they have accordingly ruled that local authorities must promptly take whatever affirmative action is needed to abolish separate school systems.

Speaking in North Carolina, Nixon not only supported "true freedom of choice" but also expressed his skepticism about the one real enforcement tool available to the federal government. Short of military intervention or decades of district-by-district Justice Department litigation, the only federal lever to encourage local compliance with the Constitution is the threat to withhold aid funds. A provision to end federal subsidies to defiant local governments was overwhelmingly supported by both parties in Congress when it was written into the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Nixon, however, said that it was "dangerous" and "going too far" to withhold federal school aid.

Later, under criticism by such GOP progressives as Senator Brooke (Mass.) and Senator Goodell (N.Y.), the Republican candidate took a more ambiguous position. In news conferences in Anaheim, Calif., and in Detroit, he said that federal aid should be denied in "a clear case of segregation." He claimed, however, that HEW had exceeded the intent of Congress and was trying to implement "enforced integration." These key terms were left undefined. In an October campaign stop in Williamsburg, Va., Nixon again supported "freedom of choice," except where it was "a subterfuge for perpetuating segregation." Once more, the words simply indicated that some decision would be made after the election.

Should the new President decide that "free choice" is all that the law demands, he will put himself in direct conflict with the rulings of the federal courts. In the historic *Jefferson County* case in the spring of 1967, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, with jurisdiction over the Deep South, ruled that desegregation plans did not satisfy the demands of the Constitution unless they actually eliminated separate school systems. The court held that local officials have the responsibility to take any necessary steps to create a unified school system.

In May, 1968, the Supreme Court completed the job of destroying the basic legal arguments for "free choice." The court held that the Fourteenth Amendment guarantee of "equal protection of the laws" could not be fulfilled so long as a "pattern of segregation" remained. State and local governments, responsible for creating and perpetuating a school system that subverts this right, were now responsible for dismantling the illegal separate school systems. "In the context of the state-imposed segregated pattern of long standing, the fact that . . . the Board opened the doors of the former 'white' school to Negro children . . . merely begins, not ends, our inquiry wheth-

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er the Board has taken steps adequate to abolish its dual, segregated system. . . ." Local authorities were ordered "to convert to a unitary system in which racial discrimination would be eliminated root and branch."

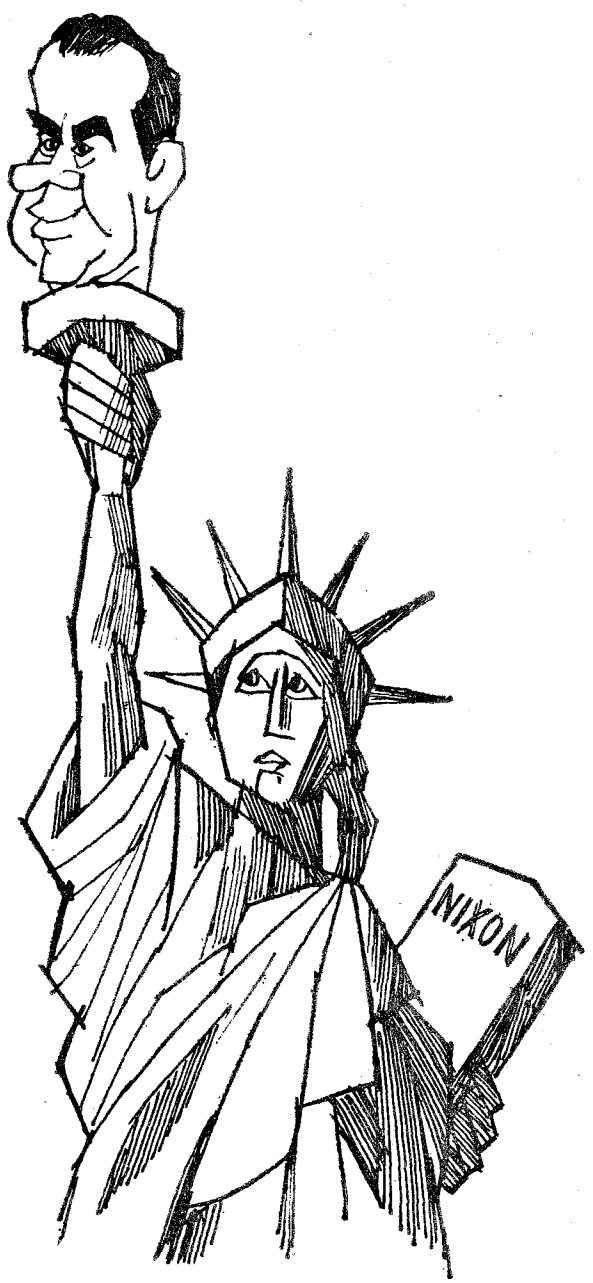
In his North Carolina speech, Nixon castigated the desegregation program as an attempt to "force a local community to carry out what a Federal administrator or bureaucrat may think is best." Later, he repeatedly charged that HEW had gone beyond the law. But the school desegregation guidelines are not bureaucratic whims. The HEW standards are actually very little more than a distillation of the case law defining unconstitutional discrimination. Since early in the program, the standards actually enforced by HEW have tended to lag seriously behind the most recent court decisions.

Nixon's decision will be crucial because the South is only now beginning to move in the direction of eliminating separate schools. While Thurmond and Wallace claim that segregation is eternal, two-thirds of the 4,500 school districts in Southern and border states now have unitary school systems. Hundreds of the remaining districts have tentatively agreed to merge their separate school systems to comply with the HEW deadline of September, 1969. Even in South Carolina, a third of the districts have filed such plans already and another sixth are under court orders to comply with the recent Supreme Court decision. Under combined administrative pressure from HEW and legal pressure from the Justice Department and the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, the job could be largely completed during the next school year.

A lapse in federal determination would give a new lease on life to the most flagrantly unequal schools in the South. Remaining opposition is concentrated in the rural areas where the caste system has been most rigid and the schools most systematically unequal. Nowhere is the myth of "separate but equal" a greater mockery. A recent study of the almost completely segregated schools of Alabama's rural black belt, for example, found black children in schools that typically cost to build one-fourth as much as those housing white students. The white schools had broader curriculums and more than twice as many library books per child. A black child was four times more likely to find himself in a school with an enrollment below the minimum size for an adequate educational program, as specified by Alabama education authorities. For the foreseeable future, that is what local control means in the Deep South. Unless the President is prepared to enforce federal laws requiring local change, generations of black children may be doomed to such schools.

Should Mr. Nixon continue present enforcement policies, he would not be supporting the overenergetic use of the fund withholding power. Approximately 98 per cent of Southern and border state school districts are at present receiving federal aid. Funds are cut off only after lengthy negotiations have proved completely fruitless and after a hearing examiner, the Justice Department and the secretary of HEW have reviewed the case. National civil rights groups, local black leaders and the U.S. Civil Rights Commission have all criticized the Johnson administration for excessive caution in enforcing the law. During a 1967 hearing of the House Judiciary Committee, Rep. Clark MacGregor, a regional manager of the Nixon campaign, accused HEW of transforming what Congress had intended as a clear and simple regulatory function into a protracted negotiating operation permitting long-term local defiance of the law.

If the Nixon Administration retires from the school desegregation battle, the entire burden will be shifted to the civil rights organizations. Primary reliance would have to be placed on the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, which has handled the vast majority of Southern school litigation. In the words of Jack Greenberg, director of the Legal Defense Fund's program, the consequences would be "extremely serious." Existing manpower is barely adequate to handle current litigation covering fewer than 10 per cent of Southern school districts. Moreover, federal district judges are products of their home states



Pierre, Aux Ecoutes (Paris)

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and are appointed with the approval of state politicians. They would find themselves in an exceedingly uncomfortable position if asked to force local officials to do more than the President, the Attorney General and HEW's Office for Civil Rights said was necessary. The probable result, Greenberg says, would be token integration and "interminable litigation." In a recent interview Attorney General Ramsey Clark predicted a "tragic erosion of black respect for law should Nixon refuse to enforce the Civil Rights Act."

The school issue is only a part of the immense task Mr. Nixon must undertake to fulfill his pledge to reunite the country. It is true that in few areas does the law so clearly demand full equality, but on few issues is the political pressure against enforcing the law so intense. When Southern segregationists approach the new President for payment of his political debt, he will perhaps recall his advice to his party in 1966: "Southern Republicans must not climb aboard the sinking ship of racial injustice. . . . Any Republican victory that would come of courting racists, black or white, would be a defeat for our future in the South, and our party in the nation. It would be a battle won in a lost cause." Perhaps he will also reflect on his debt to the moderates. Just a week before the election, a Harris survey showed Nixon receiving the support of 38 per cent of those who believe that racial change should be accelerated, and 43 per cent of those who favor a continuation of the existing rate of progress.

The decision on Southern schools will have an importance far beyond the South. If there is to be any hope of a peaceful solution to the racial crisis, the new President must demonstrate that he is as committed to enforcing laws protecting human rights as he is to those protecting person and property on the city streets. Should he abandon the struggle to carry out the simple demands of the Constitution, he would give the clearest possible sign that there is little hope for lawful change. Promises of a new departure in overcoming racial division would be discounted as worthless rhetoric from a President who refused to protect the basic right to equal education.

'BUY SOMETHING'

FIVE MYTHS OF CONSUMERSHIP

DALLAS SMYTHE

Mr. Smythe, who heads the division of Social Sciences at the University of Saskatchewan, was chief economist of the Federal Communications Commission from 1943 to 1948, during part of which time James Fly was its distinguished chairman.

Andrew Fletcher said in 1704, "I believe if a man were permitted to write all the ballads, he need not care who should make the laws of the nation." Our culture includes not only traditional forms of "high" culture such as painting and literature but also "popular culture"—the radio and TV, the screen and theatre, pocket books, phonograph records, popular songs, pornography, both "hard" and "soft," etc. Indeed the borderline between popular culture and all consumption goods has been obliterated by Madison Avenue. For at least a generation now we in North America have become accustomed to endowing our automobiles with virility, our refrigerators with sensual pleasure, our breakfast cereals with athletic prowess, our shaving cream with the taste of lemon/lime. I argue that our popular culture is dominated today by an economic system that regards life, people and things primarily as aspects of consumption. The basic myth of our culture is that consumption is the goal of life.

Twenty years ago Harold Innis said that the purpose of institutions is to help us make the right decisions at the right time. He went on from there to say that the application of mass production to the communications industry (referring then just to print media and radio) had atomized previous institutions—the family, the church, the labor union—over the preceding eighty years. We must now recognize that the constituencies of these institutions are substantially under the control of the private government which is our privately owned economic system. This is not to say that evil men run the economic system, or that a conspiracy has betrayed our nonbusiness institutions or taken them over. But it is to say that, pursuing its rational self-interest, the business community *as a whole* has created a situation whereby we subordinate our lives to its values. We live according to the consumption myth. How does it work?

. .

A society, looking at North America as a unit, is like a voluntary organization—a club, or a neighborhood improvement association—in that it works from an agenda that is agreed to either explicitly or implicitly. What is left off the agenda does not get considered attention. And popular culture, by filling our time with commercial actions and values, sets an agenda which gives consumption the top priority. I recall a recent advertisement in *The New York Times* which filled a full page with the message: "Buy Something." The popular culture's imperative—"Buy Something"—is the most important educational influence in North America today.

Just as a society lives by the agenda set by its popular culture, the popular culture rests on the agenda established by mass communication. The top priority for the mass media is consumption. Mass communications market mass-produced consumer goods. Without the marketing services of the communications media, the consumer goods industries—food, automobiles, drugs, etc.—could not dispose of their mass-produced products.

The mass media perform this marketing function by educating the population to be dutiful consumers. The

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educational process starts early. Before they can read, almost before they can talk, children are exposed to the bombardment of advertising messages on TV and radio. Skillfully engineered "point of sale" displays reinforce the educational experience when a mother shops the supermarket, with her child perched on the shopping cart, monitoring the whole operation. In this way, the child learns the importance of products. Lessons so learned are reinforced daily throughout our lives.

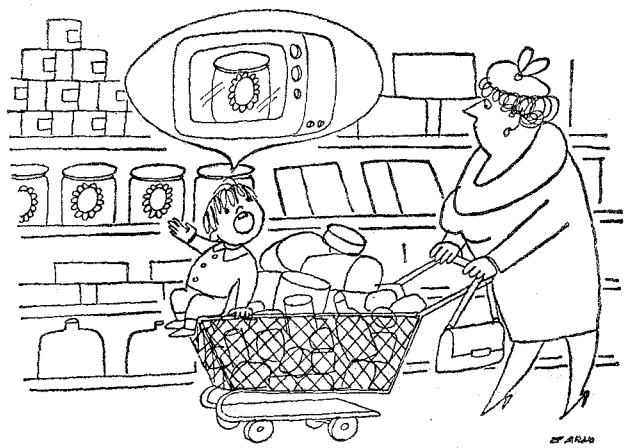
The explicit commercial message is thus the prime item on the commercial mass-medium agenda. Commercial announcements on TV cost much more per minute than do the entertainment programs they frame. They are engineered with great care and much experimentation by the most sophisticated techniques.

This raises an interesting question. Is the broadcast program material the product which the commercial broadcasting industry produces? The program material cannot be the chief product because it brings in no revenue from the audience to the broadcasting station. In fact, in economic terms, the program material broadcast commercially is a giveaway—an inducement to the population to become viewers or listeners. The chief product of the commercial broadcasters is the audience itself. Viewers and listeners are counted by market surveys, evaluated in terms of income level, age and sex, packaged and sold to advertisers.

In saying that the program material is a giveaway, I do not mean to overlook its importance. It is in fact carefully engineered. Take *The Monkees*, for example, which was engineered as any consumer commodity is engineered. The market was researched. Other entertainers, and particularly the Beatles, were analyzed to determine what characteristics in a program would "deliver" a young audience to the advertiser. A formula was developed, and the agency or network set out to recruit the elements that would fill it. The young men who came to comprise the Monkees did not even know one another until this process was near completion. From among hundreds at auditions, each was selected because he best embodied some appeals, some myths, which would "draw" and "hold" the audience. But this was only the beginning. The Monkees had to be publicized, advertised. Crowds had to be created and manipulated to produce pushing and fighting for autographs. The public had to be taught to resonate when the myth which is *The Monkees* was mentioned. At that point the broadcasters were ready to produce *the audiences* for *The Monkees* which could be sold to the advertisers.

Finally, on this point, national advertisers tell their writers just what sort of entertainment they wish to broadcast. One major advertiser of breakfast food in the United States and Canada not long ago was instructing its writers:

> In general, the moral code of the characters in our dramas will be more or less synonymous with the moral code of the bulk of the American middle class, as it is commonly understood. There will be no material that may give offense, either directly or by inference, to any organized minority group, lodge or other organizations, institutions, residents of any state or section of the country, or a commercial organization of any sort. This will be taken to include political organizations, fraternal organizations, college and school groups, labor groups, industrial, business and professional organizations, religious orders, civic clubs, memorial and patriotic societies (Anti-Tobacco League, for example), athletic organizations, women's groups, etc., which are in good standing.
>
> We will treat mention of the Civil War carefully, mindful of the sensitiveness of the South on this subject. No written material may be used that might give offense to our Canadian neighbors. . . . There will be no material for or against sharply drawn national or regional controversial issues. . . . Where it seems fitting, the characters should reflect recognition and acceptance of the world situation in their thoughts and actions, although in dealing with war, our writers should minimize the "horror" aspects. . . . Men in uniform shall not be cast as heavy villains or portrayed as engaging in any criminal



> activity. There will be no material on any of our programs which could in any way further the concept of business as cold, ruthless and lacking all sentiment or spiritual motivation.

Similar instructions go out to writers from many national advertisers. If such a process took place in schools or universities we should call it indoctrination and brainwashing. It is no less brainwashing when it takes place on the instruction of private business. Commercial indoctrination educates us in the myth that consumption is a sufficient goal, a sufficient substance for life. This is the basic myth.

A second, correlative myth cultivated systematically by mass media and the private enterprise system, is that the consumer is king; that he rules the system; can always turn off the switch, is in fact free to choose among products. If there were any substance to this myth, the Madison Avenue myth makers and their platoons of consumer preference engineers would not have done their job and not earned their salaries. Unfortunately, they have done their jobs and earned their salaries, large though they may be.

A third myth grows directly out of the pivotal importance of the commercial mass media to the marketing of goods. This is that some special magic resides in "communication." When an institution, be it the family, the church, a government agency, a business organization faces any kind of internal problem, the up-to-date "sophisticated" reaction is to call the difficulty one of communication. The aura that attends the doctor, or for that matter

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the medicine man, now surrounds those who call themselves experts in communications. Possibly no single person has contributed more to this mystification than Marshall McLuhan, whose brilliant but unsystematic essays serve to confuse people and thus create the mystery which requires the services of a medicine man for practical application. The hearty welcome which McLuhan's theme, "The medium is the message," receives from advertisers, their agencies and broadcasters is not surprising. If the content of the mass media is not important, if the medium *is* the message, then criticism of program policy is irrelevant. "The medium is the message," whatever McLuhan means by it, translates only too easily into the proposition that the act of consumership is the sufficient object of the exercise.

The fourth myth connected with the consumer system is designed to obscure the fact that the huge corporations which dominate North American economic life have preempted large chunks of the roles formerly played by other institutions. In the United States, where this myth originated, it centered on the assumption that the corporation is a legal entity and hence similar to an individual. Thurman Arnold put it this way in *The Folklore of Capitalism*:

> Since individuals are supposed to do better if left alone, this symbolism freed industrial enterprise from regulation in the interest of furthering any current morality. The laissez-faire religion, based on a conception of a society composed of competing individuals, was transferred automatically to industrial organizations with nationwide power and dictatorial forms of government.
>
> This mythology gave the Government in Washington only a minor part to play in social organization. . . . Government in Washington was supposed to act so as to instil "confidence" in great business organizations.

One way of exposing this myth is to define government. It is any organization the final decisions of which are subject to no immediate appeal. In North America, then, there are parallel systems of government; the private and the public. And in essential matters the former has the last word. President Kennedy came off second best when he tried to overrule the steel companies a few years ago and his successor learned the lesson.

The fifth myth arises out of the fourth. It is that if the public government makes decisions in matters of communications policy application, this is censorship and automatically bad, but if private government makes such decisions, all will be well. A relatively small number of such decisions, made in the operation of the mass media of communications, involves the mass production of enormous amounts of content. I suggest that the myth that public government is malevolent while private government is benevolent is insupportable, especially in the absence of democratic process in the private government's decision making.

If this analysis of the myth-making picture of our consumption-tied economy is valid, what could, what should, be done about it? This is a question which the young people who so disturb many of us have been wrestling with for some time. While there is no single explanation for the increasingly urgent protests being made by beatniks, hippies, the New Left and the Yippies, one evident basis for their behavior is that they reject the consumer-tied system as inhuman, immoral and indecent. Their studied defiance of convention in matters of dress, hair styling and domestic arrangements is a protest against the irrelevance of the pursuit of consumption on a continent and in a world where other goals should prevail.

They tell us what these problems are: stubborn pockets of poverty where the delights of consumption are bitter illusions; neglect of the right of minority groups to a cultural identity of their own; abuse of the environment by the pollution of air and water which an unplanned economic system forces on us; irrational military adventures; imperial exploitation of underdeveloped by developed nations, and so on.

The young people's protests overlap those of the blacks whose concern for "soul" is also a defiance of consumership values. By their irritating, even infuriating, tactics, the young people are trying to force our attention upon these problems. Before cracking down on them from positions of power in the North American institutional structure, we should listen carefully to what they—the young and the blacks—are protesting.

If these protest movements do not manage to get the agenda of problems sorted out more sensibly—if the consumer society manages to absorb these rebellious people into safe, Establishment niches, then we shall be in trouble even deeper than we are today. We shall have proved ourselves so indoctrinated to the consumption-based life that we no longer care enough to take over our own institutions and make them serve our human needs.

Do I have a panacea—any easy solution to the problems arising from our slavery to what Erich Fromm calls the "*homo consumens*" myth? Of course not. I do feel that an essential first step toward that solution is to confront the facts honestly and, as Freud said, to face our guilt squarely. Assuming that that was done, I would say the next step was to rub the brainwash off some traditional notions. For example, the notion of planning. Faced with the necessity of planning for survival, the people of this continent have never shrunk from it. And I mean by planning simply policy making, followed by action, regardless of whose toes are stepped on.

We face a seamless web of persuasion and power based on the consumption drive of North American private industry. If the people are to be masters of their own fate they must plan for cultural survival. Planning does not mean breaking the machines or denying ourselves the benefits of modern technology. The Scandinavian countries, Holland and Switzerland, have disposed of that bugaboo. Planning does mean that public decisions must be accepted even when they tell private enterprise when and where and how to invest its capital. That is the nub of the planning issue and it must be squarely faced. If we do not accept planning on those terms, we have no real proposal for putting man first and consumption second. If we do plan on those terms, the mass media and the popular culture will be obliged to cultivate myths more compatible with human dignity and human values than the cluster of myths surrounding the consumption which now guide our lives.

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

Joey and Sebastian Grown Up

AND OTHER STORIES. *By John O'Hara. Random House. 336 pp. $5.95.*

THE BEASTLY BEATITUDES OF BALTHAZAR B. *By J. P. Donleavy. Delacorte Press. 403 pp. $6.95.*

SHAUN O'CONNELL
Mr. O'Connell teaches English at the University of Massachusetts.

There they stand, O'Hara and Donleavy, brooding out at us from the dust jackets of their latest books, both dressed in herringbone tweed jackets, placed boldly before their possessions, two American Irishmen who have made it and damn well act the part. Though the part seems less an act with O'Hara. He stands before his grand house and Ford wagon, under his Eton cap, pulling away at a nonfiltered cigarette, a fearless man of means. Donleavy's photograph, on the other hand, looks like a put-on which didn't come off. He hides behind his trim beard, in his knickers and socks, leaning on a carved cane, before a castlelike country manor. But there is a slouch in his shoulders and a wince in his eyes which work against his jaunty pose. O'Hara seems a Pal Joey grown rich and old, Donleavy a Sebastian Dangerfield grown heavy and wistful. Perhaps this analysis is a bit of fancy. (Johnson said, "The Irish are a fair people—they never speak well of one another.") But, if so, I am only projecting onto the photographs of O'Hara and Donleavy impressions conditioned by their latest works of fiction.

And Other Stories collects eleven O'Hara stories and a novella. About status, passion and aging, they are in a way footnotes to his major novels. O'Hara's characters are here punished excessively for breaches in decorum, like Julian English in *Appointment in Samarra*. They are driven by uncontrollable passions, like Grace Caldwell Tate in *A Rage To Live*. They make it and then wonder whether it was all worth while, like Joe Chapin in *Ten North Frederick* and Alfred Eaton in *From the Terrace*. They kill the things they love best, like Robert Millhouser in *Ourselves To Know*. In other words, these stories are redundancies, perpetuations, without variations of themes.

O'Hara's techniques have not changed either. These are sensibility stories, often dependent upon delayed revelations. Self-revelations: a woman discovers that it was Lesbianism not infidelity which drove her into divorce; a young man discovers he lacks the quiet self-mastery needed to be a gangster; a playwright discovers that his dead, father-obsessed beloved, was wrong about her father's merits and, therefore, not worthy of love. Mutual revelations: a farmer who had to leave college (like three others in this collection) confesses to a girl that he is forever trapped; an aging couple confess their infidelities to each other; an aging society widow confesses to Arthur McHenry (Joe Chapin's law partner) the sexual perversions of her dead husband.

O'Hara's characters fittingly adjust themselves to his theme and docilely help him complete his patterns. They cannot sustain the kind of self-mastery they and O'Hara value. Joe Chapin—whom we know will have an affair with a girl his daughter's age, then consciously drink himself to death—tells his law partner:

> I'm not a puritan, but if people like you and me don't follow certain rules, how can we expect other people to? I'm speaking of the people that grew up without our advantages and the young people you hear so much about today.

But, even if there are "rules," O'Hara's characters cannot abide by them. They slip down—infidelity, Lesbianism, *parti à trois*, alcoholism—victims of themselves and counters for an author who slides them over a glaze of realistic details toward their carefully arranged ironic ends.

Though they are always fun to read, O'Hara's stories leave you with nothing, patterns without purpose. His famous dialogue is always bright, assemblages of American jargon: went the limit, putting out, all the way, on the make, snatch, quail, gash, dike, madly in love. You can be interested, too, in his gratuitous information: distinguishing the status implications of the Packard roadster and the Mercer phaeton; learning when they began to drink Rob Roys in Pennsylvania; discovering just who George Olsen, a 1920s dance band conductor, was. But finally, irony is all. His stories impinge, when they do, because they make striking cases for disillusionment; they embody poor (though often rich) schmucks driven by passions, aspiring to successes which will turn empty on them. But the characters are too weak and the patterns too strongly contrived to be plausible. Besides, O'Hara has told it all before and better.

It is no surprise that Donleavy cannot sustain the jaunty pose he is attempting in his dust-jacket photograph. Unsustained poses and qualified jauntiness have been his concerns since *The Ginger Man*. There, Sebastian Dangerfield sought unqualified happiness—"ease and comfort and quiet is all I want"—by absorbing into himself all people and all things without giving a drop of himself in love. When circumstances won't yield to his insistence he overwhelms them with his imagination, as when he becomes the suave Percival Buttermere, O.B.E. He runs through those who love him, across Dublin, increasingly aware of the impossibility of his quest. He senses that if he cannot absorb all, he will eventually lose all; he will die. The best he can manage is a shaky, jaunty pose before this awareness. "When I die I want to decompose in a barrel of porter and have it served in all the pubs in Dublin."

This is Donleavy's simple, touching theme: the impossibility of fulfillment, no matter how many advantages—of vitality, wit, beauty or money—one presses into the service of one's quest. George Smith, in *A Singular Man*, is rich, unselfish and shy, but he can only feel happiness for a night. In Donleavy's shorter works—*Meet My Maker the Mad Molecule* and *The Saddest Summer of Samuel S*—he clearly turns a corner. The undercurrent of sad awareness becomes dominant; the jaunty poses and wild ways of his picaros become muffled in tones of pathos.

In *The Beastly Beatitudes of Balthazar B*, Donleavy posits a hero who is everything that Dangerfield was not. Balthazar ("possessor of treasure") is blessed with wealth, beauty, the capacity to love and be loved in return. But he can hardly survive, despite his advantages, in a world split by war, raddled by bad luck, rife with meanness. Balthazar is separated from those he loves—his father, his uncle, his nanny—and seeks completion by loving others, a simple but impossible quest. He learns in bed with Bella, a new nanny, that "love is for everybody wherever it may be no

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matter what you are." Sexual love then becomes his "holy grail." But, when he and Bella are discovered by his mother, Balthazar learns another lesson: "true love is always sure disaster."

Dangerfield reappears in this novel as Beefy, a character of uncompromising charm and selfishness. Like Balthazar, he will try to win happiness from those who, themselves thwarted, would deny its existence, like the boys' headmaster, who knows "that without rules chaps would be waltzing naked in Picadilly." While O'Hara's Joe Chapin feels he should be sustaining "rules" in which he disbelieves, Donleavy's Balthazar and Beefy try to break past impediments. Beefy imagines bawdy breakthroughs—"do the indecent thing to do, if possible"—and Balthazar imagines an ideal love with his beautiful Fitzdare, "away in the soft green peace Fitzdare." Both fail. They are caught with women in Beefy's room and chucked out of Trinity; Beefy is disinherited; Fitzdare dies. "Life is always travelling to a sorrow," Balthazar says.

Though both O'Hara and Donleavy would agree with the sad findings of Fitzgerald—that other American Irishman to whom they both owe much—when he said, "the natural state of the sentient adult is qualified unhappiness," they have different ways of demonstrating their sadnesses. O'Hara's people are pushed around by his plots and their own impulses, puppets to whom things happen. Donleavy's people press the possibilities of life with high style and win many tactical victories of great hilarity—Balthazar has the joy of seeing a sex-hating Irish landlady become so infuriated that she drops her false teeth onto a floor soaked by his broken bottle of urine—before they are defeated. Donleavy's vision of sadness seems earned, won by a search of all the possible routes toward happiness. O'Hara's vision of *nada* seems contrived, slickly stacked cards blocking straw men. So, finally, the photograph of O'Hara, looked at more closely, reveals a hint of desolation which seems more convincing than his writing. But it is hard not to fancy a hint of joyfulness behind the pained eyes in Donleavy's photograph, the joy of the artist who can embody his vision, however bleak, the self-certainty of the writer who can so eloquently move his hero to name his pain:

> Reach up and gather all this world. Before dark or any other people should ever come. And find you sheltering. As all hearts are. Worried lonely. Your eyes quiet. By the waters cold. Where sadness lurks so deep.
>
> It doth
> Make you
> Still.

Isolated Successes

AGENTS OF CHANGE: A Close Look at the Peace Corps. *By David Hapgood and Meridan Bennett. Little, Brown & Co. 244 pp. $5.95.*

STANLEY MEISLER

Mr. Meisler, Africa correspondent for the Los Angeles Times, *was formerly deputy director of the Office of Evaluation and Research in the Peace Corps.*

Since the beginning, most writers about the Peace Corps have either derided it or heaped praise on it, but never understood it. In this book, David Hapgood and Meridan Bennett, two former officials of the organization, never mock or gush about it but always understand it. Their work is tough, realistic criticism, so tough and real that it is sometimes cruel and occasionally unfair. But it tells us, as no other book has, what the Peace Corps is all about.

In assessing the work of the 30,000 volunteers sent to the Third World since 1961, Hapgood and Bennett conclude that "as a contributor to development in the Third World, the Peace Corps can make no great claims to accomplishment. . . . Volunteers have filled a lot of jobs, but their utility on those jobs, and often the utility of the jobs themselves, is questionable."

The writers do see more hope for the future. "An enormous potential clearly exists in the Peace Corps. . . ." they write. "If the Peace Corps can build on the isolated cases of its success that its volunteers have registered, then its help to the Third World could be much greater than it has been to date."

But, even if the potential for development is unrealized, Hapgood and Bennett see a great deal of worth in the project. "Though they have not yet contributed much to development . . ." the writers go on, "the volunteers have justified John F. Kennedy's idea many times over by what they have learned. What they do with that learning in later years will be the measure of what the American people are getting for their money. In our opinion, we Americans are likely to draw high dividends from our investment in the Peace Corps. Americans are getting a very special education at a bargain price: This is the clearest result of the Peace Corps experiment. . . . Returning volunteers have helped to take a lot of the mystery and fear out of the American view of the Third World."

Although it may not sound that way, their assessment is gloomy and their praise rather faint. The surest way to destroy the outfit would be to encourage volunteers and officials to look on themselves as part of a great educational experiment instead of a serious attempt to deal with the development problems of the Third World. If the Peace Corps really is no more than "a very special education at a bargain price," it ought to pack up. Despite what they say, the conclusions of Hapgood and Bennett make the venture seem like a failure.

In reaching their conclusions, Hapgood and Bennett set down the most debilitating problem of the Third World, the syndrome of poverty that makes its victims feel dependent, suspicious, hostile, and inadequate:

> The victim of the syndrome often sees his survival as beyond his control. . . . He is suspicious of the people he has grown up with, unwilling to extend them confidence enough to cooperate in mutually beneficial projects. . . . He meets the outside world with hostility, and frequently the familiar world as well. . . . Hope is a luxury he cannot afford.

Moreover, they go on, "change is a threat. The citizen of the underdeveloped world tends to be inflexible, to resist that which is new."

Development comes when these poor overcome their resistance, inflexibility and fear, and accept some change. A volunteer can contribute to this development if he serves as an "agent of change" and helps the fearful poor build enough self-confidence to overcome the inner barriers. A good "agent of change" recognizes that he must deal in small, timid steps, for even the smallest and most timid change seems awesome to those afflicted with fear.

The book acknowledges that some volunteers show "apparent effectiveness" as agents of change. The best volunteers are those who understand the local culture, use and adapt local techniques to improve production, keep their own powers limited and unobtrusive, and help open new channels of communication among the poor. But Hapgood and Bennett believe very few volunteers have so far had the sensitivity and guidance to do this job well.

Volunteers and planners in Washington have failed, according to the authors, because they have often attempted to impose American attitudes and techniques on the people they were trying to help.

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This faith in the innate goodness of American ideas reaches deeply into the Peace Corps. The writers describe Corps officials in Washington who sometimes assigned volunteers overseas without too much concern over what they would be doing, confident that any contact with volunteers would have to be valuable to people of the Third World. "If you peel this assumption to its core," Hapgood and Bennett say, "you find a colossally ethnocentric attitude: That we Americans are so good (or skilled, or democratic, or whatever) that our very presence among the less fortunate is a benefit in itself."

The book rightly describes the work of the Peace Corps as cultural imperialism, as intervention in the affairs of others. "Do Americans have any right to thrust themselves into distant societies so different from their own?" Hapgood and Bennett ask. They never answer the question, except to note that American intervention is probably inevitable. But it is clear from the tone of the book that they do not like the idea much and are troubled by it.

In fact, Hapgood and Bennett seem hung up on this issue. They sometimes assess the value of a change on how American or un-American it is. Since the idea of change itself or development or modernization can be construed as somehow American, or at least Western, a reader sometimes gets the feeling that the authors might be uncomfortable with any change at all that is provoked from the outside. That, of course, is a false impression, but Hapgood and Bennett do seem to carry their argument to an unfair extreme in their discussion of Peace Corps work in education.

There is sharp criticism of the organization for its mad rush into teaching at the beginning. "Teaching was . . . the easiest job for the Peace Corps to take on," and it blindly filled almost any request by a Third World government for teachers. But the schools of the Third World are often less concerned with development than with the perpetuation of an elite class. The writers call these schools "the stronghold of the elite . . . a class of overprivileged rulers, more concerned with cars and other material goodies than with progress, holding the masses in profound contempt." By supporting such schools, the Peace Corps "has laid itself open to the charge that it is implicitly encouraging the ruling elite to spend lavishly on an irrelevant school system while starving the nation's other needs."

Hapgood and Bennett are justified in making so sharp an attack on this rush to teaching. But they are just as sharp in condemning the Peace Corps's attempts to reform its teaching programs. In the last few years, some officials have insisted that volunteer teachers are useless unless they make an attempt to reform the elitist, unthinking, rote-learning educational systems of the Third World. But the book dismisses this as another form of cultural imperialism, insisting that a volunteer teacher who helped his students to learn problem solving, democracy and creativity would be helping them learn American values. Recalling that French colonial teachers once required their African students to read from a book that began, "Our Ancestors, the Gauls, were tall men with fair hair and blue eyes," Hapgood and Bennett say, "it does not take too great a leap of the imagination to visualize . . . the school children of the Third World reciting to their approving volunteer teacher: 'Our ancestors, the Founding Fathers, were democrats and innovators. . . .'"

This strikes me as a rather churlish and offhand way to dismiss the work and potential of almost half the volunteers in the Peace Corps. Since most Third World school systems are irrelevant, and since most will continue to

Caterpillar—
6
Caterpillars are strange, hard to tell which is The head — OLSON, DUNCAN — sort of medieval armored horse — McCLURE — or hind end like helmet of knight — SCHWERNER — front end sort of tribal — ADRIENNE RICH! — be feathered, fanged — ESHLEMAN — whiplash form — KELLY, BIALY, HELLER, EARLY, EIGNER, A caterpillar shaped like an octopus! Infinite variety — WAKOSKI, DAUMAL! IRBY, ROTHENBERG, JESS, LANSING, so shy under all the freakish garb. Buy it many places for $1.25. 160 pages!!! Vital poetry! Brazilian — with a black mane
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exist anyway, it does not shock me when Peace Corps volunteers infuse them with a few American values to try to make them more relevant to the Third World. Perhaps I am just a little less squeamish than Hapgood and Bennett about cultural imperialism. But, though I see more hope for reform in the teaching programs, I would agree that the Peace Corps has spent too much of its energy on education and not enough on activities like rural development that are more relevant to the modernization of the Third World.

In a sense, the publication of this book itself is a tribute to the organization. Both Hapgood and Bennett were members of the Peace Corps Evaluation Division, a staff of writers, journalists and lawyers whose job was to travel abroad and analyze the work of the Peace Corps. Under the leadership of Charles Peters, a former West Virginia legislator who is now publishing the *Washington Monthly*, the evaluators were tough critics who forced the Corps into painful self-analysis and helped it profit from its foolish blunders. For years the Peace Corps had been hearing the same kind of tough talk from Hapgood and Bennett that they are now dishing out to the public. This kind of self-criticism is rare anywhere and probably unique in the United States Government.

All in all, I found the conclusions of the book too harsh. I think the volunteer group is more successful than it admits, at least compared to the massive blunderings of other American organizations on the murky, ironic and heartless paths to development. But Hapgood and Bennett set the terms for any intelligent discussion of the matter. They know the problems of Third World development. They know the terror of change in the frail bodies and souls of the poor. They know the cultural snags that entwine the volunteer. They know the limitations and potential of young and innocent Americans. Tough and harsh, they help us see the real Peace Corps.

French Characters

AN IMPERSONATION OF ANGELS: A Biography of Jean Cocteau. *By Frederick Brown. The Viking Press. Illustrated. 438 pp. $12.50.*

SACHA GUITRY: The Last Boulevardier. *By James Harding. Charles Scribner's Sons. 277 pp. $6.95.*

HAROLD CLURMAN

Frederick Brown does not love Jean Cocteau, whose biography he has written; he is fascinated by him. Or to put it more precisely, he is dazzled by the world and times which Cocteau sparked. *An Impersonation of Angels* is a scintillating portrait of that remarkable period, from 1900 to 1929, which the French have named *la belle époque*.

It was the time "when fashion, politics, literature and journalism milled together with noisy self-acclaim in surrounding cafés, torn by the Dreyfus affair but united by a common passion for theatre on stage and off. Everybody played a role." For all that, there was more to that enchanted day than the twitter of "café society." It was a time of creative ferment in a constellation which included such varied luminaries as Proust and Picasso, Bergson, Valéry and Gide, Stravinsky and Matisse, Debussy and Ravel, Diaghilev and the Surrealists.

What is especially notable in Brown's book is that though he was born in 1934, and could not have seen Cocteau act Mercutio in a dilettante but highly decorative version of *Romeo and Juliet*, his description of the occasion is altogether accurate. This is as true for the figures he discusses. They are drawn with an unfailing eye for the telling detail: we actually seem to be in the presence of these talented men and women.

Brown is severe—at moments almost "bitchy"—with Cocteau, but I regret to say that he is more or less right. He sums up at one point by saying that Cocteau "devoted more of his energy to the persona than to the self." He speaks further of Cocteau's being "fertile in stillbirths," and "opining brilliantly." His more substantial criticism of the Cocteau *oeuvre* is genuinely perceptive, displaying an understanding of Cocteau, not only in his work but in his person. Brown is an acute psychologist whose animadversions are not limited to malicious anecdotes or gossip. While he divests Cocteau of his motley he makes us comprehend the tragic aspect of the naked man underneath.

Why, one may ask, if Brown cannot admire Cocteau, should he have taken the pains to write so thoroughgoing an account of his life? The answer is not only the one I have suggested above: that Cocteau in his incessant activity tried to make himself part of every significant literary and artistic movement but because his undoubted gifts were of a kind—common everywhere among the smart sets—which glitter and flash to the astonishment and applause of all those to whom the arts are a show, a rarified circus rather than an essential human communication. "He invented a style," Brown says, "a style . . . melodramatic yet spoofing, wise and wisecracking, irreverent but somehow sadly aware that it lacks the confidence or the energy to make a statement of its own touting and mourning its own sterility." Its spirit tends toward the "sleek and invertebrate, given to cumulus landscapes, ghosts, clowns, pierrots and pale, pale children."

This is well said as is almost everything else in the book. Brown possesses an extensive vocabulary which errs occasionally in the ornamental use of words denoting exotic finery and gems. He also is given to Anglicizing foreign terms. Among other blemishes—the book may arouse resentment in certain quarters—is his inclination to generalize from his subject's particular case to areas where the author is on unsure ground, as in his slighting of certain phases of Picasso's and Stravinsky's art. And though what Brown says in regard to Cocteau's homosexuality is in itself penetrating and convincing, there are misgivings when he extends the diagnosis to homosexuals as a "breed."

Still this biography conveys a sense of Cocteau as a man—versatile, witty, thoroughly aware, deeply troubled: a flawed poet but a poet nonetheless. The reader still cannot help being attracted to the handsome elegant of intense gaze who could say "that the writer [is] a prison from which the works escape, only to be pursued by police the world over." Such a man merits all the attention Brown has lavished on him.

James Harding's biography of Sacha Guitry covers almost exactly the same historical moment as Cocteau's. Cocteau was born in 1889 and died in 1963: Guitry, born 1885, died in 1957. Both were fantastically voluble and precocious: Cocteau entered the social whirl at the age of 15, Guitry had his first play produced at 17 and achieved success at 20. Both were prolific, but while Cocteau wished to reign in the world of (pretty nearly seven) arts, Guitry's realm was that of that bright-light theatre once supreme in all the continental box offices and salons of *haute couture* entertainment. He wrote, acted, staged about 120 plays, and did the same for more than thirty films.

Though Harding summarizes the plots of many of these plays and films, his book conveys greater excitement about the froufrou of the boulevards than about the theatre as craft or art. We learn very little about Guitry's rehearsal methods, his work with actors, his technical procedures; we hear a good

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deal about his fabulous art collection, his *bons mots*, his five glamorous wives, his fashionable coterie; Harding's Paris is gay Paree. The subtitle of his book—*The Last Boulevardier*—is most appropriate.

One of my first attempts to write theatre criticism when I returned from my student days in Paris was a profile-essay on Guitry. It began with the phrase, "Sacha Guitry, the minnesinger of cads." What I meant is exemplified in some of the Guitry quips quoted in Harding's book: "To be married, to have a mistress and to desire her with somebody else makes it look as if one is becoming faithful to one's wife again—more or less"; or, "As for the man who runs away with your wife, there's no worse punishment than to let him keep her"; or again, "Beware of the women you marry, because the ones who don't deceive you will reproach you for it all their lives—as if it were your fault, while often enough it isn't even theirs!"

Guitry no doubt possessed seductive charm, a gracefully flippant ease as an actor combined with perfect diction, and a voice of pleasantly nasal sound. He had a voracious appetite for pretty things and pink sentiments from jewels to fine paintings and other *objets d'art*. He was the prime courtesan of the Parisian stage.

It is good to learn from Harding's book that Guitry had never collaborated with the Nazis as had been reported. (His two months' imprisonment on this unfounded charge is the one truly painful note in his career.) The greatest pleasure I derived in reading the book was a nostalgic one, induced by its cast of "characters." The charming playwright, Tristan Bernard, the odd and crotchety dramatic critic Paul Léautaud (Maurice Boissard) about whom I wrote my first published piece, and the writer, Jules Renard (author of *Poil de Carotte*), were "originals" as captivating or eccentric as anything they created. Such beings aglow with the full folly of living seem to be extinct in our contemporary American cultural galaxy, which has seldom little more to recommend it than intellectual fuzz, secretive backbiting or moneyed gloss.

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Playing the Game

THE REMNANTS OF POWER: The Tragic Last Years of Adlai Stevenson. *By Richard J. Walton. Coward-McCann. 255 pp. $5.94.*

HARRY BARNARD

Mr. Barnard is writer-in-residence at Roosevelt University, Chicago. He is the author of Eagle Forgotten: The Life of John Peter Altgeld *(Bobbs-Merrill) and other biographies.*

Richard Walton, who served as Voice of America correspondent at the United Nations, quite properly views the last years of Adlai Stevenson as tragedy. The subtitle of this long lament—reminiscent of a betrayed lover's sad grieving—is quite apt. But Walton errs, I think, in viewing the tragedy as wholly Stevenson's. Rather, it concerns Stevenson's personal following, especially those individuals in very high places in the current Establishment who professed to be his very dear friends.

A good many of them used Mr. Stevenson for their own purposes. They professed to share his values with respect to the issues of war and peace. But they were really hawks. Or they were merely opportunists who did not care one way or another about the cold war, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Vietnam, or even the United Nations.

They allowed Mr. Stevenson to think that they agreed with him. They applauded his speeches. No doubt they were sincere at times in their enthusiasm. Especially the lovely and chic ladies whom he continually attracted. But what he apparently did not realize was that many, if not most, of those admirers were really applauding his rhetoric, while they went on supporting the cold war, and accepted everything we were doing in Vietnam.

They also "accepted" Adlai, for all his eccentricities. They eagerly invited him to their posh apartments and country estates, gave him the use of their offices and other personal privileges, laughed at his jokes, lent their women as his escorts. But their hearts belonged to the Establishment that stood for nearly everything Stevenson opposed. And why not? Most of those in his intimate circle were Establishment people, or its servitors, including several top-flight columnists.

Was not Stevenson also an Establishment man? Yes, he was: member of a "first family" of Illinois, a product of Choate, Princeton and Harvard (with Northwestern's Law School only a kind of afterthought), member of prestigious corporation law firms, and all that. But there *was* a difference. He wanted, perhaps naïvely, to reform the Establishment's ways and thinking. Such, at least, was the tenor of his great utterances. But precious few were his associates who showed that they took to heart his "call for greatness." Later, when the chips were down, and they had a choice between Eugene McCarthy and Hubert Humphrey, or between Steve Mitchell and Dick Daley, most of them were with Humphrey and Daley, right down the line with the cold-war Establishment.

Then there were the leaders who were not especially bosom friends. One may start with the Kennedys and then go on to include Truman, Johnson, Acheson, Rusk, and so many others who had what Stevenson did not have—the power to shape foreign policy. They too praised him.

Worse than that, they took him in. Frequently, they made him an instrument of their policies. "Adlai is my official liar in the UN," John Kennedy supposedly once laughed about the man who had so eloquently urged that our public leaders "tell the truth."

Rusk paid him great deference, as he should have. Stevenson apparently had everything he needed—beautiful women as assistants, both staff and secretarial; sleek limousines and liveried chauffeurs; luxurious offices and more

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luxurious living quarters in the Waldorf; jobs for all his friends—everything, that is, except what he apparently most prized, an intelligent, honest foreign policy.

True, Walton documents that Stevenson declined to the very end of his days to disavow *publicly* the Johnson-Rusk policy on Vietnam. Also, that Stevenson positively rejected the idea that he resign in protest over Vietnam—this section forming one of the most interesting and revealing parts of Walton's valuable book. But there is no doubt that Stevenson did in fact oppose the Johnson-Rusk foreign policy.

There is also no doubt that he intended to resign at the end of 1965 because he could no longer stomach his dubious connection with Johnson and Rusk. Yet he would not have given his opposition to them as the reason. As he several times told friends, "That would not be playing the game." He was a gentleman and gentlemen abide by the rules, be it soccer or the fate of the world.

That, of course, was Stevenson's tragedy. Not even for the sake of his own integrity could he rise above being a gentleman in politics. But, as I have indicated, this book really documents, and well, the point that the greater tragedy concerns the influential people who formed the Stevenson coterie.

They live on to continue their high-level mischief. Stevenson was what he was. Even in violating his own principles, and Walton insists he did, much to Walton's anguish, Stevenson was true to himself as a gentleman.

But those others—the hypocrites and sycophants in the worst sense—remain influential. That is real tragedy, not only for them but for the country today.

Where Are the Playwrights?

CATHARINE HUGHES
Miss Hughes covers Off-Broadway and Off-Off-Broadway for Show Business. *She has worked off Broadway as an assistant director, and her play,* Madame Lafayette, *was produced there successfully several years ago. She is a theatre consultant for the New York State Council on the Arts.*

Every so often drama critics, human despite all, have moments of optimism—usually early-season moments. And occasionally they lead to such headlines as: PLAYWRIGHTS ARE ON THE WAY BACK.

The Sunday Telegraph (London) being an eminently respectable medium and its critic, Frank Marcus (*The Killing of Sister George*, etc.), being a responsible journalist, one's heart leaped with hope. Perhaps, against all evidence to the contrary, Mr. Marcus had come upon something. Perhaps there was still room for other than the Living Theatre—often admirable—Tom O'Horgan, and derivatives of Peter Brook. Perhaps we really were about to rediscover words and ideas in the theatre.

Alas, no. After slaps at Britain's National Theatre ("It was clear that [playwrights] were disqualified . . . on account of being alive"), which seemed gratuitous, given present repertory and future plans, and at the Royal Shakespeare Company (where they were disqualified "on account of being British"), which seemed more accurate, given the RSC's markedly mediocre "American season," he placed his hopes on new signs of life at the Royal Court. May they be fulfilled. But as no one, certainly not Mr. Marcus, needs reminding, the Royal Court is not what it once was. And the fall entries in its proposed resurgence have been something less than auspicious.

Nevertheless, Marcus did raise *the* question: "Where have all the playwrights gone?" Obviously not to visit the Queen; and by common consent, they were not on Broadway in this season's first semester. Israel Horovitz, Terrence McNally and Leonard Melfi, with the collectively titled *Morning, Noon and Night*, have scarcely set the populace to shouting. Joseph Heller's *We Bombed in New Haven* was noteworthy only for its good intentions.

Are they, then, Off-Broadway, where once the action was? Today, Little Broadway might be a better name. Allowing for the one or two exceptions that prove the rule (Mart Crowley of *The Boys in the Band*, and perhaps Horovitz, will be worth watching next time round), what once was the playwright's hope is now more often his despair. Its most successfully recent offerings—both artistically and financially—have been musicals: *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown, Jacques Brel Is Alive and Well and Living in Paris, In Circles*—all perfectly splendid in their own terms—or plays such as *Futz!* and *Tom Paine*, more interesting for directorial techniques and supposed shock value than for the writers or ideas they revealed. Lincoln Center's great discovery of late last season, 22-year-old Ron Cowen, may some day prove as good as a few indulgent reviewers say he is. (His recent television special, however, was not encouraging.) But *Summertree* was little more than a sentimental, poorly structured soap opera. One had the feeling that some critics, overanxious for the Repertory Company to succeed, were patting it on the head a trifle prematurely. Perhaps some day someone will explore fully why, in almost exactly the same five-year period that Lincoln Center Repertory has been in existence, Olivier's National Theatre has developed into what is probably the finest company in the English-speaking world. Surely the desire of actors to work with Olivier is not the only reason. Nor is the British Arts Council subsidy, which in fact is rather small.

Perhaps Off-Off-Broadway has attracted the writers? Here, one treads with care. It is the current sacred cow (more often for those who have seen a half-dozen of its productions at two or three of the better theatres than for those who have seen several dozen more widely scattered). It is to the late sixties what Off-Broadway was to the fifties—the place where it's happening. It can be good, and it can be absolutely atrocious, and the risk is for the taking.

Unfortunately, the risk is getting greater. With some fifty or sixty "theatres" now functioning on one basis or another, quality is in some cases markedly off. (I have seen more rank amateurism in the past two or three months than in all of the preceding year.) But that is not the only disturbing thing about the current state of Off-Off-Broadway. With occasional exceptions, it is only marginally what it set out to be. When it began—an event variously dated as September 27, 1960, when a Greenwich Village coffeehouse called Take 3 presented Alfred Jarry's turn-of-the-century *avant-garde* play *King Ubu*; somewhat earlier with Cafe Cino; or in terms of consistent production of new works, at the Judson Poets' Theatre in 1961—the intention was to provide new writers with a forum, a place to experiment, a place to fail. To some extent it has done so, and reality has perhaps dictated the departure: fifty or sixty theatres, some of them offering a new production every few weeks, often in the form of two or three one-acts per bill, will quite obviously run out of new writers, at least of writers worth attention. The consequence is an increasing number of revivals, fine in their own right, but seldom sufficiently well produced to do the plays justice; and a plethora of indifferent to shoddy work.

One dares to hope that some day soon the chaff and the wheat will be separated, that Off-Off-Broadway will undertake the sort of self-reappraisal that alone can save it from what it threatens to become—the province of dilettantism, narcissism, and self-celebration. The threat of fifty or sixty small groups speak-

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ing only to themselves is not an idle one, as anyone can attest who has been in lofts, basements and back rooms containing an audience of a dozen or less (and those not infrequently in some way related to the production). If theatre is not a "popular art," neither is it, as someone remarked recently, an exercise in artistic masturbation.

All of this is not to deny that some interesting work, even some exciting and potentially important work, is being done OOB. It is unquestionably to be found —at the Judson Poets' Theatre, at Theatre Genesis, at Cafe LaMama, at the tiny Playbox, and a few others. The odds are not of the best, but theatrical odds never have been. However, the approaches taken by a few of the theatres provide some indication of just how curiously the OOB deck is stacked.

Al Carmines, the energetic young associate minister who guides the arts program at the Judson Memorial Church (and wrote the music for the hit *In Circles*), describes Judson as a playwrights' theatre. And, to a greater extent than some of the others, it remains so, despite increasing specialization in musicals. At least there is more emphasis on text, somewhat less inclination to directorial self-indulgence and novelty for its own sake. It gave Sam Shepard's *Red Cross*, revived Off-Broadway last season, its first production (though the newer Theatre Genesis is really Shepard's base), and has presented some of the work of Rochelle Owens, Rosalyn Drexler, Maria Irene Fornes, Lanford Wilson, H. M. Koutoukas and others.

By contrast, Thresholds is an intimate third-floor loft theatre, seating forty people. One recent production, a dramatization of Lewis Carroll's *The Hunting of the Snark*, is representative of the let's-scuttle-the-playwright approach. According to the director, the aim was to take Carroll's narrative poem about an unlikely crew that sets out in quest of a snark as the basis for "a redivision of responsibility for the theatrical event," in which the actor takes on "the responsibility of making the play happen," and the acting ensemble "can share in the playwriting." It brings seven actors into the playing area, where they then begin to stretch, exercise, and utter sounds ranging from guttural to musical. They study themselves in mirrors and, in theory, prepare for the roles they are about to create. Eventually, they go off on their voyage, each assuming what the director terms a "facial mask"—of a beaver, a rabbit, a Britannia-Rules-the-Waves bellman, etc.—as an external aid to the achievement of an inner reality.

The evening had its moments, but far from enough of them. And one could ask oneself whether there were not many more of them for the director and cast than for the audience, whether the repetition of such approaches will, in the long run, suffice even for the performer. Mr. Carroll was not around to complain.

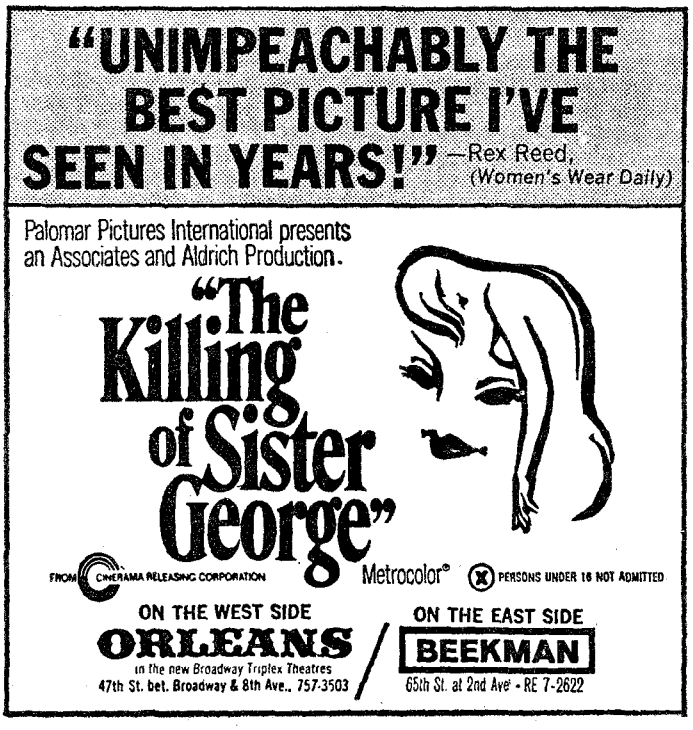
At Cafe La Mama, now firmly established in a new foundation-endowed home, director Tom O'Horgan holds forth. O'Horgan (*Hair, Futz!, Tom Paine*) is a talented young man, perhaps the most inventive and enterprising that the New York branch of the New Theatre possesses. Whether he, and what he represents, is good for the playwright is another matter. If it is sufficient for a director to take a bad play, most recently Rochelle Owens' *Futz!*, and make it into a Theatrical Event, O'Horgan is very good indeed. Probably, neither he nor Miss Owens sees it that way; quite possibly, both think it a good play. What it is, of course, is a good excuse.

Everyone has heard of *Futz!* by now —that little love-in-the-barnyard drama about a man and his pig, Amanda, and how they make out together; how the wicked villagers, ignoring the fact that Amanda's obviously the right girl for him, do in poor Cy Futz for the crime of being different. It is a mediocre play, with no originality of thought and deprived as to language; a modern morality about people blind to their own faults and self-righteous about what they consider the faults of others.

Futz! is important, if that is the word, as a symptom of the increasing sublimation of script to displays of directorial virtuosity, or what sometimes passes for it. In the article referred to in the first paragraph, Marcus lamented the "disdain for the writer" in London's experimental theatre, "the actors preferring to strip to mumbled improvisations of their own invention." In America, this tendency has gone a good deal further. Joseph Chaikin's Open Theatre workshop set out to evolve a form in which playwrights, directors and actors, working together from the start, create the play. Jean-Claude van Itallie's interesting *America Hurrah* and Megan Terry's *Viet Rock* are its best-known achievements thus far. Richard Schechner and his Performance Group have carried matters somewhat further with *Dionysus in '69*, a work with antecedents perhaps less in Euripides than in Antonin Artaud.

Artaud, that tragic and erratic genius to whom the New Theatre, and Peter Brook in particular, owes so much, asserted: "We shall not act a written play, but we shall make attempts at direct staging, around themes, facts or known works. . . . I propose a theatre in which violent physical images crush and hypnotize the sensibility of the spectator seized by the theatre as by a whirlwind of higher forces." Proclaiming "No more masterpieces!" he called for "a theatre which eliminates the author in favor of . . . a director who has become a kind of manager of magic, a master of sacred ceremonies."

With or without Artaud, O'Horgan's aisle-hopping, let's-be-friends actors, nudity, animal noises, consistently high decibel level and acrobatics; Brook's ritualistic howls, hisses and gasps, huge gold phallus, and jazz band in his production of Seneca's *Oedipus* for the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British National Theatre, are all perfectly valid, at least for as long as they do not become ends in themselves. Too often, they do.

Irving Wardle of the London *Times* wrote: "For me [*Oedipus*] represented the dead end of the Artaud movement in Britain: a tragedy by the ultimate master of the 'theatre of cruelty,' whose equal eminence as a stoic philosopher was blotted out by stage bloodshed. . . . What remains are the bare bones of a mighty legend, supporting a mounting series of empty horrors presented by a ritualistic group of principals versed in Oriental movement, and a chorus who intensify the ceremony with drumming, Karate gestures, and spasms of mirthless laughter . . . . [It is] concentration on mindless visceral emotion at the expense of intellect."

But somehow it works—or, rather, it worked in *Oedipus* and it has worked in at least some of Brook's other productions, though certainly not in all. The reason, I suspect, is that, Wardle notwithstanding, Brook's direction is *not* nearly so "mindless" as the work of some of his imitators and emulators. Although often self-indulgent, Brook is not a director discovering a new toy. "I have sometimes been accused of wanting to destroy the spoken word, and indeed in this absurdity there's a grain of sense," he observes in *The Empty Stage*. "Is there another language, just as exacting for the author, as the language of words? Is there a language of actions, a language of sounds—a language of word-as-part-of-movement, of word-as-lie, word-as-parody, of word-as-rubbish, of word-as-contradiction, of word-shock, or word-cry? . . . The theatre needs its perpetual revolution. Yet wanton destruction is criminal; it produces violent reaction and still greater confusion."

Brook, at least, realizes that heat is not really a substitute for light, that the idea of "shocking" the audience into a new awareness, of evoking its response and moving it from its lethargy is legitimate only to the extent that *where* it is moved is not simply another vacuum. Young though it is, the new, highly physical, visceral theatre already finds itself threatened by what must seem the greatest curse of all: the dullness of repetition. The second or third time round, nudity is taken more or less for granted; by now the assorted Anglo-Saxonisms produce the same glassy-eyed indifference as does an Arthur Miller Home Truth; and the actor who hands out flowers had best bring the watering can the next time.

One thing the New Theatre—and by this I do mean the relatively quiescent Theatre of the Absurd—hasn't done for us lately is make us think. (Neither, for the most part, has the old, but that is another matter.) And, of course, it is still ideas, rather than effects, that are likely to do so. The New Theatre has not been able to go beyond the surface; achieving momentary immediacy, it has not shown that it has anything to say. Often visually arresting, it has thus far not known what to do with the attention it may fleetingly compel. (Does one respond in any way deeply—assuming one is not a voyeur—to the extended nudity of Terrence McNally's *Sweet Eros*, or to being dragged into participation in the orgy or rock dancing of Schechner's *Dionysus*?)

All this might be less depressing if it were not for the fact that, by relying on

THE THIRD WORLD

This loud morning
sensed a small cry in
the news
paper
caught somewhere on
an inner page
I
decide to travel for lunch &
end up in an automat
White House Cafeteria
looking thru a little window
put a nickel in the slot
and out comes
fried rice
Taking a tour
of the rest of that building
I
hear a small cry
beyond the rice paddies
between floors where
the escalator sticks
and remember last night's dream of
attending my own funeral
at a drive-in mortuary
not really believing
I was that dead
Someone throwing rice
All the windows dry
Tipped the coffin open & laughed
into it
and out falls
old funnyface
myself
the bargain tragedian
with a small cry
followed by sound of Che Guevara singing
in the voice of Fidel

Far over the Perfume River
the clouds pass
carrying small cries

The monsoon has set in
the windows weep
I
back up to
the Pentagon
on a flatbed truck
and unload the small brown bodies
fresh from the blasted fields!

LAWRENCE FERLINGHETTI

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the actor's experience of his art—and, presumably, of himself—and the director's ability to startle, shock or surprise, today's experimental theatre steadily and consciously diminishes the playwright's role to that of providing only the framework. Frameworks are notably lacking in perception, sensitivity or depth. Theatrical experimentation with form—even sheer theatrical gimmickry—is vital as a force for breaking with the stereotyped thinking of the past. But when the audience begins, as it inevitably will, to shrug and ask what's new, the New Theatre may find itself with writers who have never created a true character, fully explored an idea or motivation, or followed it to its conclusion; with "playwrights" who can do little more than provide the outline for a directorial extravaganza. Extravaganzas are notoriously short-lived.

MUSIC

DAVID HAMILTON

As a postscript to the *Ring* operas recently reported in these pages, the Metropolitan Opera presented on December 21 its only other Wagnerian presentation of the current season, a revival of *Die Meistersinger* that, by comparison, vividly demonstrated the shortcomings of "normal operating procedure" in such repertory. This opera is, after all, one of the half dozen summits of the art, and in its requirements of both mass and detail provides a touchstone of an opera company's resources and capabilities.

While the *Ring* operas were presented without cuts, *Meistersinger* is currently abridged to the extent of about thirty minutes. These cuts are neither as numerous nor as brutal as those practiced in the 1950s, but some are exceptionally ill chosen. To remove Hans Sachs's "Hat man mit dem Schuhwerk" (at his renunciation of Eva in Act III) is rather like playing Act III, Scene 3 of *Hamlet* minus the "Now might I do it" speech; a visible gesture may express the decision made at this point, but it can hardly convey the structural climax implied by Wagner's crucial development of the "Wahn, Wahn" music and the "Shoemaker's Song" from Act II. This particular deletion leaves major musical threads untied and must, moreover, be effected by a harmonically clumsy splice—all for the sake of four minutes' running time. I suspect that these cuts are made to avoid running into orchestral overtime, but if they are done to minimize audience fatigue, they bespeak a dubious comprehension of the nature of musical time: there is no easier way to make a coherent work seem "long" than to fragment its coherence by omitting essential musical discourse.

The level of orchestral execution was disappointing throughout the evening, save in the Prelude to Act III, where the relaxation of Joseph Rosenstock's generally precipitate, underarticulated tempos gave the wind and brass a chance to relax and play not only accurately but also musically. And, for all its flaws, the orchestra shone by comparison with the chorus, which is by and large, day in and day out, the most consistently trying feature of Metropolitan performances—ragged in ensemble, uncertain of intonation, and raw in tone. A particular visual offense, amidst the generally attractive staging, was the gaggle of buxom altos and middle-aged tenors who passed for "apprentices," although the campy ballet that accompanies the procession of the guilds runs a close second.

Aside from a few gaggy double-take routines, the stage action was well planned, subject to the acting limitations of some of the singers. And, to complete the picture of an average night at the Met, there was a wide spectrum of vocalism, including at least three highly satisfactory performances: Karl Dönch's brilliant Beckmesser (if only he would *sing* the Doctor in *Wozzeck* this well!), Loren Driscoll's elegant David, and Giorgio Tozzi's consistently improving Sachs (already a distinguished dramatic portrayal, but lacking ultimate vocal security). Ironically, the cuts were primarily at their expense (especially Tozzi's), although all the singers suffered equally from the mucilaginous and hasty orchestral proceedings, and none could overcome the absence of structural articulation in the performance as a whole.

The point of all this is not once again to belabor the Metropolitan management for its way of doing things. Nearly every improvement one can imagine for this performance would have cost money: more rehearsals, some restaging, more and better choristers, a better conductor—for that matter, even restoring the cuts and adopting more reasonable tempos, which would run into overtime. And money is just what the Metropolitan hasn't got (it is, naturally, irritating to see them spending money on such trivia as *Adriana Lecouvreur*, or new productions of *Tosca* and *Trovatore*, but these were paid for by funds donated specifically for the purposes. It is an unhappy fact that operatic works as large and complex as *Meistersinger* are subject to a special kind of inflationary spiral: they cost so much to present that they are done less frequently; therefore their revival, at increasingly longer intervals, requires an even heavier schedule of rehearsals, especially by the orchestra.

Once upon a time—say in the 1930s—when the entire Wagnerian canon was performed every year, the orchestra needed (and doubtless got) less rehearsal. Nowadays, given the turnover of orchestral players, a production such as next year's *Siegfried* (last performed in 1962, and before that in 1951 and 1957) may well need as much rehearsal as if it had not been played in decades. Even Karajan's highly polished *Walküre* of last season has lost some of its luster a year later, and when *Wozzeck* was "revived" in 1965 after a four-year lapse, the original significant (if hardly triumphant) effort turned into a disaster.

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there was also the general indifference to dramatic and visual values (between 1920 and 1948, only one Wagnerian opera was invested with fresh scenery). These factors meant that, given suitable singers (Flagstad, Melchior, Schorr and the like were in residence for much of the season) and a competent conductor (Artur Bodanzky, later Leinsdorf, Szell, Busch, Reiner and others), the operas of Wagner and Strauss—nothing more difficult was attempted in those years—could be managed as part of a routine repertory operation. (I am not suggesting that the performances of thirty years ago were significantly better—but much more was attempted, and the musical achievement, if not its visual counterpart, was quite comparable.) Today, the need for more rehearsal, the expenses of adequate staging, and the jet-propelled unwillingness of leading singers and conductors to spend the entire season in New York—combine to make steady diets of Wagner and Strauss (let alone anything more complex) almost indigestible for a repertory company. As a result, only a few such works can be done every season, and the spiral continues (sometimes in peculiar ways: one leading Wagnerian tenor—almost the only respectable one, at the time—stopped coming to the Met because they couldn't offer him enough performances).

In compensation, the Metropolitan now offers a more varied repertory, if hardly an up-to-date one; instead of nine Wagner operas and two of Strauss, we have this season three Wagner, two Strauss and one each of Britten and Berg. But this kind of opera depends least on what the Met provides best (singing), and most on great conductors and adequate rehearsal. If the Met cannot continue to present these works adequately, we shall need more than the operatic "Museum of Modern Art" that New York's musical life now so grievously lacks; we shall not even have a respectable historical museum. The forthcoming revivals of *Die Frau ohne Schatten, Peter Grimes* and *Wozzeck* will provide important evidence as to whether such works are still viable in a normal operatic economy.

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THEATRE

ROBERT HATCH

Jules Feiffer's first play, *Little Murders*, has arrived at Circle in the Square in Greenwich Village after vicissitudes on Broadway and out of town. It is an excellent evening in the theatre; that it is an excellent play I would not be so quick to say, but it has been directed by Alan Arkin to resemble a most eventful one. Actually, not a great deal happens.

Happens, that is, in terms of human intercourse. Feiffer's stock in trade is the multiple-frame cartoon in which a contemporary type thinks aloud, his ruminations rising, station by station, from specious rationality to veritable dementia. That, basically, is the device he has adapted to the stage, both for the overall development of the play and in its individual scenes.

By his title, I take Feiffer to mean that we are killing one another, institutionally and interpersonally. Gunfire can be heard in the streets at the opening and it has risen to a pandemonium of urban violence at the close. Meanwhile, within the depressed but almost classless apartment that is the single set, familial guerrillas are at work. The father is a pugnacious loser, the mother a believer in the power of aphorisms to uphold standards; there is a disheveled son, stewing in idleness, who confides that what he wants to do, really, is direct movies.

A daughter comes home with her latest fiancé ("another of those fags," her father fears in advance), and these two set the domestic sound tracks in motion. It is a cacophony between the generations, but also intragenerational. The daughter is a revolting combination of two repellent types—daddy's best girl and the competent American female. She can spar three rounds with anything in pants, she is Little Miss Fixit and she is determined that everyone shall live up to what she sees as the best in them. She is perfectly miserable in her frustrated need to be bossed around, but unhappily her young man (and apparently all her previous young men) is supine in combat, passive in love, disengaged from tradition, and bored with his own professional success. These nonentities in a vacuum aggress at one another according to their several humors, but it is here that Feiffer's gift for lampooning his age in isolated boxes works against his aspirations as a playwright. *Little Murders* never generates an organic life; there is a good deal of physical contact, but almost no intellectual or emotional reaction. The characteristic episode is a monologue on a rising pitch, with the speaker flinging himself into a chair or out the door on the climax, and his recipients left gazing at their shoes. Indeed, three persons—a Jewish judge who blesses America for having allowed his immigrant parents to wreck their health on his behalf, a Greenwich Village pastor to the hippies and a paranoid police captain—are brought on to give just one long monologue apiece. The interplay on stage is so minimal that I could not understand why, after the girl is killed by a sniper's stray bullet, her husband (there has been a marriage) should be suddenly transformed into a relentless operator. If you were to ask me what the play is about I should be reduced to ticking off the illusions, prejudices and perversions that Feiffer cites as disfigurements of our society. More comprehensively I could not say, because plays are about what people do to one another, and these people do nothing.

That, I have no doubt, is how Feiffer sees us—a multitude of isolated mouths prating poisonous nonsense—and he has a point, if a somewhat simplified one. It may be, though, that the stage is not the best place for stating it. One comes from *Little Murders* feeling more beaten upon than enlightened.

Nevertheless, the script is funny—dangerously funny, because Feiffer draws his characters from among his audience, and his lines can be heard in the lobby during intermission; more humiliatingly, they can be heard coming from your own lips on the way home. Feiffer is one of those artists who compel life to conform to their visions.

Linda Lavin is a small-boned girl who has some trouble living up to the physical specifications of the daughter; otherwise, the cast gets itself well set in Feiffer's uniforms. The three walk-on monologists, Shimen Ruskin, Paul Benedict and Andrew Duncan (in the order mentioned above), have obviously been polishing their lines for weeks before audiences of delighted friends. Each of them now possesses a sure-fire night-club turn.

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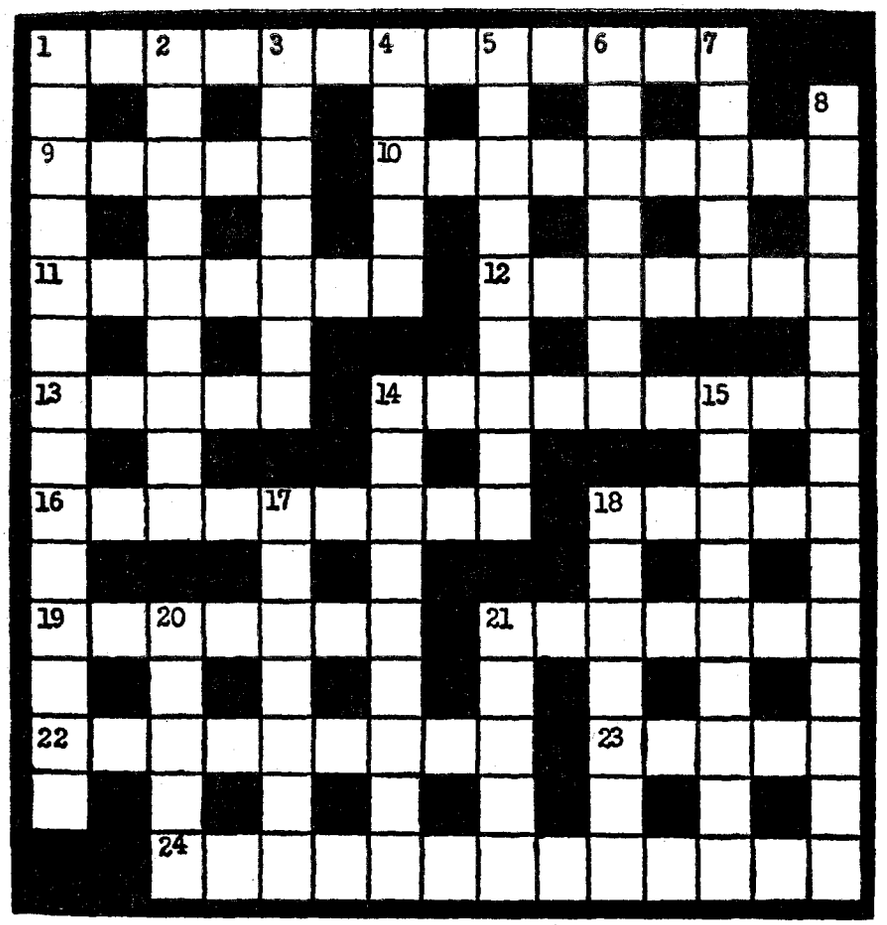
Crossword Puzzle No. 1281

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 Those in it are not the heaven's brightest! (5,8)
9 Sound guides for the city. (5)
10 Broken out as sure as a union outfit, in a way. (9)
11 Surpass an alternative exit sign? (7)
12 Within it I always show up first. (7)
13 A pseudonym for a writer or two. (5)
14 No charge for minor surgery, depending on what the writer might do. (4,5)
16 Spray starch around and push their form of power, perhaps. (9)
18 Let out, or taken on? (5)
19 Arranged in layers. (7)
21 See 14 down
22 Moore's charms, when young? (9)
23 Does it have nothing to offer in architecture? (5)
24 By doing it, one can create items of contemporary revolution. (8,5)

DOWN

1 Thieves' haven of dissenters? One hopes not to resort to it! (4-3,7)
2 What athletes shouldn't do in obvious downpour. (9)
3 One who is stupid gets in before long to pose as an English writer. (7)
4 One might give us character, subject to review. (5)
5 They dispense things in fine shape. (9)
6 Insinuate it might be not yet out? (7)
7 Kernel emission containing resin. (5)
8 Was being stubborn the sometime quality of the Minotaur? (14)
14 and 21 across Good grief, why the megaphone? (3,6,3,4)
15 Did De Quincey have it, or perhaps even Rip Van Winkle? (9)
17 Might be associated with coffee, if you're thinking of Bach. (7)
18 Is the toe matched by this? (3-4)
20 Looks like a Tarzan-type statement of a dwarf, after drinking too much of it? (5)
21 Pipe and barrel represent two types of it.

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 1280

ACROSS: 1 Final period; 9 Multiple; 10 Angles; 11 Several; 14 Strait; 15 Bastille; 17 Predator; 20 Reacts; 22 Abetter; 26 Tivoli; 27 Elevated; 28 Instigation. DOWN: 3 Asphalt; 4 Peer; 5 Reaches; 7 Purest; 8 Vessel; 13, 2, 24 and 12 A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush; 16 Inamorato; 18 Rabbit; 19 and 6 The gift of gab; 20 Respect; 21 Tatter; 25 Yegg.

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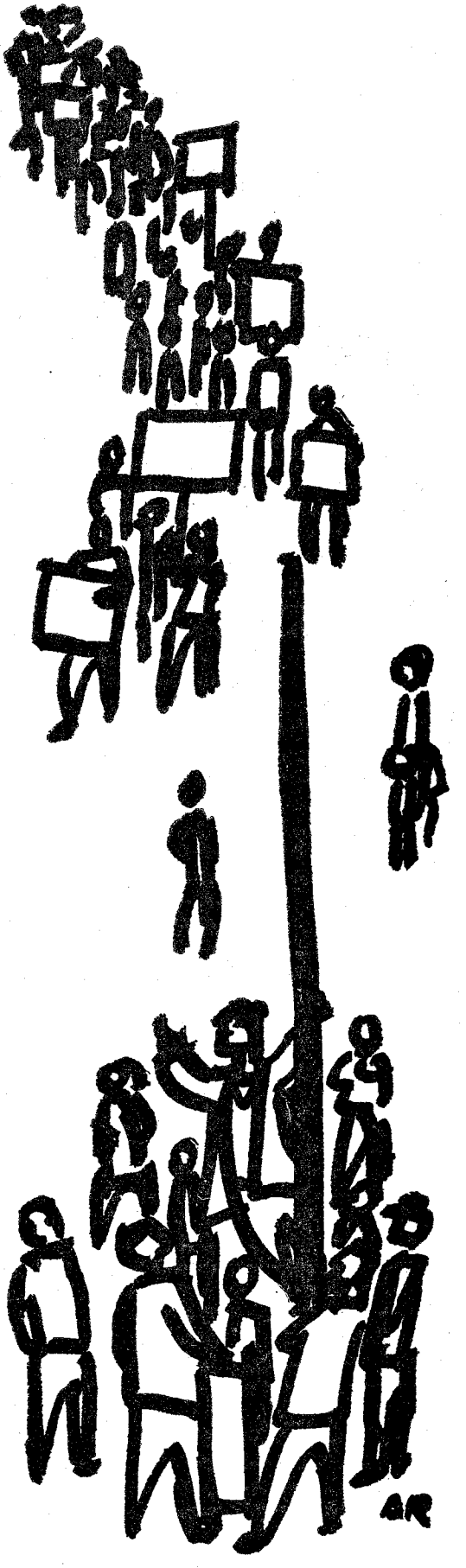

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